Landscape Stewardship Guide

Northeastern Area Association of
State Foresters

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Note to Program Managers and State Foresters

This guide was developed by a committee of program managers like you. We recognize that each State has achieved tremendous accomplishments in forest stewardship. **Landscape stewardship** is designed to build upon these efforts. This approach links current and emerging forest stewardship practices as well as other conservation approaches—initiatives that are community based, involve multiple owners, and take an "all lands" approach, among others developed by our State partners.

We acknowledge that while there is no one right way to collaborate, using concepts in this guide will promote greater success in practicing stewardship at the landscape scale. With this in mind, you have the freedom to be creative and open to new approaches, and to encourage people working at a variety of scales to think and act in mutually supportive ways.

We believe that private forest land management is entirely a service-based discipline. As program managers, service to the public must be a constant philosophy and practice. What landscape stewardship comes down to is expanding and strengthening our working relationships so that we can get more great things done together.

One of those working relationships is the Forest Stewardship Program administered by Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. This program seeks to understand how important forest land conservation and management are to private forest landowners and communities, and then build on this. The Forest Stewardship Program is focused on informing, influencing, and engaging forest landowners and communities to help them make educated decisions about their forests and connect their objectives with the societal needs that publically funded programs are tasked with addressing.

We are aware of the economic realities and budget struggles facing our society in this early part of the 21st century. We understand that there is great need to better manage all forest land and that there are limited financial and human resources available to support this management. The demand for real collaboration keeps growing in all disciplines, and landscape management is no exception. Will you make the commitment to tackle this challenge for your State, together with all partners?

Landscape Stewardship approaches can assist a State with addressing priority issues and opportunities and the related **priority areas** identified in the State's Forest Action Plan, formerly referred to as the State's Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy. This can be accomplished by encouraging collaboration among all stakeholders within a priority area, including private forest landowners, to achieve their objectives within the context of the Forest Action Plan, leading to a greater public benefit.

Things to keep in mind:

Landscape stewardship is an "all lands" approach to forest conservation that works across multiple ownerships to address issues and opportunities identified in each State's Forest Action Plan.

A **landscape stewardship project** is a collaborative effort to achieve desired social, economic, and environmental objectives shared by the stakeholders through community and landowner engagement.

A **landscape stewardship plan** is one element of a landscape stewardship project. It is a multi-landowner Forest Stewardship Plan written to address landscape-level issues across all ownerships.

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Introduction

Program Guidance

This document provides you and other Cooperative Forestry program managers with broad guidance on a landscape approach to forest stewardship in the region served by Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. This approach has strong potential to increase our ability to sustain the benefits that both society and individuals derive from privately owned forest land by engaging landowners and their communities in its management. Landscape stewardship can help keep forests as forests.

Engaged landowners are likely to make management decisions that sustain the health, productivity, and diversity of their woodland. Similarly, engaged communities are more likely to make decisions that improve the viability of owning private forest land than are their disengaged counterparts. A landscape approach to forest stewardship:

- Builds agency and organizational capacity
- Builds community capacity
- Builds landowner trust of agencies and organizations
- Increases collaboration among partners
- Motivates landowners
- Supports the application of science and knowledge
- Makes service delivery more efficient

What is Landscape Stewardship?

Landscape stewardship involves bringing together the stakeholders in a **community of place** or **community of interest** to address resource-based issues of mutual concern. Different stakeholders typically have different views of an issue. For example, a public agency may be interested in improving forest health to conserve an endangered species, a woodland owner may be interested in improved fishing or hunting opportunities, and a member of the public may be interested in access to trails.

The landscape stewardship approach is predicated on the likelihood that these different “stakes” will be satisfied by common solutions. This approach follows five general principles in developing and applying these solutions:

- Invest in priority areas – be strategic
- Build a collaborative network – create ownership in the process and leverage resources
- Appeal to self interest – understand stakeholder motivations and needs
- Manage for results – align actions with objectives and evaluate outcomes
- Encourage flexibility at all levels – be adaptive; every situation is unique

What is a "Landscape"?

A landscape approach to forest stewardship focuses on a geographic area or subject area. In the State Forest Action Plan, priority areas have been defined and may provide a ready-made area of focus for your landscape approach. The actual extent of a "landscape" will vary depending on both the issues and objectives identified at the beginning of the landscape stewardship effort and the approach taken to address them. Landscape approaches can cover thousands of acres. The pattern of ownership may be more important than acreage in defining the landscape. The ability to effectively communicate with and subsequently engage private forest landowners should be a primary consideration in defining the extent of the landscape.

The "All Lands" Perspective

Landscape stewardship approaches should incorporate all land use types within a defined project area, which may include urban or agricultural areas as well as public and private lands. Achieving shared objectives in a landscape depends on a range of community-level land-use policies, the mix of existing land uses and activities within the landscape itself, and the conservation and natural resource management programs implemented in the project area. Conversely, the management and condition of privately owned woodland may impact the social, economic, or environmental objectives of the wider community.

A Landscape Stewardship Approach to Natural Resource Conservation

Landscape stewardship is divided into four inter-related phases. Use this four-part structure to organize and develop both your landscape stewardship program and landscape stewardship projects throughout your State.

- *Planning* – Develop a common vision and desired future conditions. Further develop goals and specific steps to reach that future. Focus on results and suggest the means to achieve those results.
- *Coordination* – Build on existing relationships, foster new partnerships, initiate outreach, and begin to allocate project responsibilities using agreed-upon strategies.
- *Implementation* – Bring the project's pieces together through interested stakeholders to reach the goals identified in the Planning and Coordination phases of the approach.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation* – Track accomplishments and evaluate the effectiveness of program actions and investments. Celebrate outcomes and determine ways for the project to adapt for continual success.

The landscape management concepts in this document draw on a wealth of relevant research and literature blended with the real-life experiences of those who developed this guide.

Relationship to Other Conservation Approaches

Landscape stewardship is but one major approach to forest conservation. It is closely related to traditional individual landowner assistance programs because it expands the number of private landowners who are engaged in the stewardship of their woodland and know what condition it is in, how to manage it, and how important it is.

Engaged landowners are aware of professional forest management resources, are more likely to access forest management information, and are predisposed to seek and follow professional advice when they need to make management decisions. In contrast, most family forest landowners will only make resource management decisions a few times during their ownership tenancy, so a comprehensive forest stewardship plan may be of limited value to them.

Landscape stewardship projects significantly increase the number of engaged individuals and communities, which in turn increases benefits to all stakeholders as well as society at large. This collaborative approach reduces the costs to deliver services to landowners and their attendant communities.

What steps should be followed in the planning process?

> "Pennsylvania has found that landscape-scale planning is a powerful tool that links communities with their forest resources."
>
> – Dan Devlin, Pennsylvania State Forester

There are many ways to organize a landscape stewardship planning process. Just as it is essential that States have the flexibility to develop their own processes, States will also need to grant their landscape stewardship partners flexibility to create and tailor their own planning processes. These processes support the customizing of the local planning process yet retain the basic principles that sound planning not only promotes community engagement, it also builds trust. We suggest the following five steps as a starting point for organizing a planning process:

- Engage People – Convene and Engage Interested Stakeholders
- Analyze and Describe Your Community of Place or Interest
- Formulate Desired Future Conditions, Goals, and Strategies
- Develop Initial Outlines for Coordination, Implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation
- Include Mechanisms for Public Review and Plan Approval

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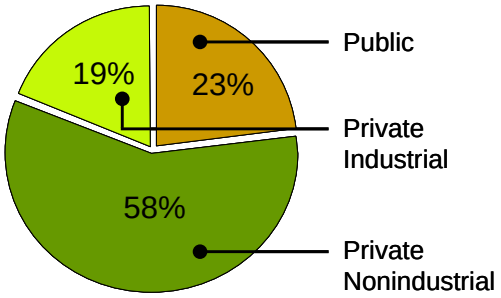
Section 1: The Importance and Context of Landscape Stewardship

The Importance of Private Forest Land Stewardship

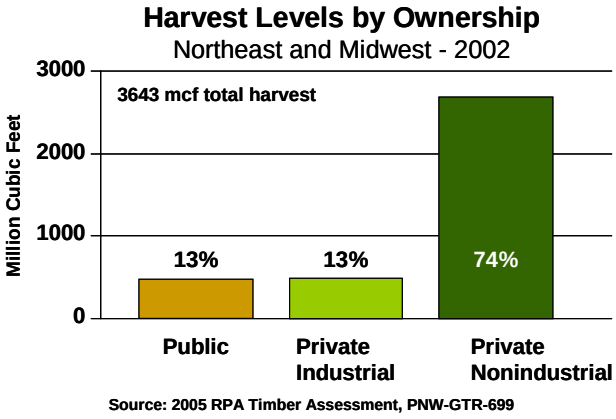
The stewardship of private forest land is important because forests are important. The condition of private forest land affects the economic, social, and environmental health of many communities.



170 mm acres

Forest land of the Northeast & Midwest

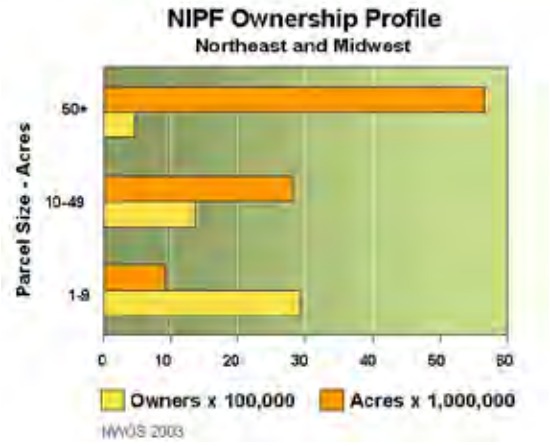
Forests cover roughly 42 percent of the Northeast and Midwest, with 77 percent of those forests in private ownership. Privately owned forest land (both industrial and nonindustrial) produces more than 87 percent of the timber harvested in the region, most of which comes from nonindustrial private forest land, or NIPF. NIPF refers to tracts of land that are less than 5,000 acres and not owned by corporations or government. This land is the principal source of vital ecosystem services such as wildlife habitat, clean water, recreation, and timber.



Source: 2005 RPA Timber Assessment, PNW-GTR-699

Publicly owned forests—local, State, and Federal lands—are valuable tracts of protected land used for wildlife refuges, nature-based recreation, high-quality water sources, and economically important fiber. Public forest land is sustainably managed by statute. A number of States have elected to have their forests certified via a third-party certification process such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Many industrial forest lands have also elected to certify their lands via FSC and SFI.

For the remainder of this guidance document, we'll use the term "private forest" to mean nonindustrial private forest land, unless otherwise noted.



Sustaining the critical flow of goods and ecosystem services from private forest lands to the public depends on the cooperation of millions of private landowners, augmented by communities in which public policy and public sentiment support forest conservation.

Enhancing the effectiveness of cooperative forestry programs

Given that there are nearly 5 million private forest landowners in the Northeast and Midwest, not every landowner can be served individually. Cooperative Forest Management (CFM) programs have done an outstanding job of assisting private forest landowners over the years, and most have prioritized tracts of 10 or more acres to improve their cost effectiveness. Yet only 8 percent of eligible forest land in the Northeast and Midwest is managed under individual Forest Stewardship Plans as of 2010.[1] While this measure does not fully portray the impact and influence of CFM programs across the region, it does suggest that focusing on one-on-one landowner assistance may not be the most effective means to achieving the mission of the Forest Stewardship Program as set forth in its enabling legislation: to encourage the long-term stewardship of nonindustrial private forest lands.

Working collaboratively with other resource agencies, nongovernmental organizations, communities, and landowners at the landscape scale is a more effective way of influencing forest stewardship, and it should result in increased benefits to communities; wider recognition of the value of forests and forest sustainability; and ultimately an increase in the health, productivity, and diversity of private forests and a decrease in the rate of land conversion.

The landscape approach to forest stewardship focuses on the needs and objectives of two types of client communities: communities of place, such as municipalities, townships, counties, or similar geopolitical units; and communities of interest, a coalition of public and private sector entities with a shared stake in an issue or opportunity. By focusing on community-based issues, a landscape approach to forest stewardship creates place-based solutions. This place-based stewardship has the potential to engage vastly more forest landowners, streamline individual stewardship plans for landowners who need a high level of service, and provide a framework and context for the use of other solutions to the challenges facing a landscape. This document provides guidance and identifies tools to do both.

> "It is time for a change in the way we view and manage America's forest lands with an eye toward the future. This will require an unprecedented, all-lands approach that engages the American people and stakeholders. It is essential that we reconnect Americans across the Nation with the natural resources and landscapes that sustain us."
>
> —USDA Secretary Vilsack
> August 14, 2009

Consider

At the end of each section of this document, there are one or more **tips** on how to initiate a particular function or task in landscape-scale stewardship. This document also includes an appendix and a Web site (landscapestewardship.org) for more information. The U.S. Forest Service will maintain and support these resources to help States establish their own landscape-scale stewardship programs.

[1] USDA Forest Service. 2010. Fiscal Year 2010 Forest Stewardship Program Accomplishments. Performance Measurement Accountability System (PMAS). Washington, DC.

Benefits of Landscape Stewardship

In addition to significantly expanding the influence of forest stewardship on private forest lands, landscape stewardship can also strengthen the interactions across all forest ownerships—public and private—and encourage cross-program collaboration among urban and community forestry, forest health, fire, and other programs. Some outcomes States have seen from landscape stewardship include an increase in the following:

- Awareness of agency roles by publics, decisionmakers, and landowners
- Agency and organizational capacity to deliver the stewardship mission
- Community capacity to resolve resource-related issues
- Use of State and local land-use policies favorable to forest stewardship
- Landowner trust of agencies and organizations
- Number of landowners who embrace and participate in forest stewardship
- Use of science and technical knowledge
- Efficiencies in service delivery
- Emphasis on strategically investing our limited time and resources

Consider

Frequently describe the benefits of landscape stewardship as you build your State programs. This might include a simple list that the State program manager develops from project-level experience, formal announcements from the State forester, or an official press release.

Five Principles for Developing an Approach to Landscape Stewardship

Principle 1. Invest in Priority Areas

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Title VIII (aka the "Farm Bill") required that States prepare a statewide assessment that describes forest resource conditions and trends, identifies threats to forest lands, and designates priority areas. It also required a State forest resource strategy to address threats to forest resources. The statewide assessment and strategy are now called the Forest Action Plan. Landscape stewardship can be an effective and efficient way to address forest management-based issues within priority areas.

"State assessments have become an emphasis that guides **focus, priority, and outcomes**. As we look across the landscape, meaningful efforts are achieving Redesign goals, and continued progress and support is growing as we broaden our reach."

—Jim Hubbard
Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry
Redesign Update
November, 2008

Principle 2. Build a Collaborative Network

Leverage scarce program resources by building coalitions of private, governmental, and nongovernmental organizations with a stake in the subject landscape. Stimulate productive collaboration by identifying and capitalizing on existing relationships within the community. Encourage and support voluntary (and inclusive) participation by key organizations, groups, and individuals to:

- Build on participants' sense of community.
- Find consensus on resource strategies that help achieve community objectives.
- Maintain focus on significant (and often difficult) issues.

Relationships and trust are the foundation of landscape-scale approaches.

Principle 3. Appeal to Self Interest

Landscape stewardship seeks to engage landowners and their communities by helping meet their needs and objectives as a means of reaching State or regional objectives. Engaged landowners are predisposed to make informed decisions that keep forests as forests, and engaged communities are predisposed to support informed landowners' decisions. Satisfying self interest and meeting local or community needs are pathways to meeting broader societal interests.

Principle 4. Manage for Results

The overarching goal of the Forest Stewardship Program is to sustain nonindustrial private forest land. The program seeks to influence and engage private forest owners and their communities, help them recognize the rewards and satisfactions that come from the proper stewardship of their forest lands, and guide them toward making informed decisions about their woodlands.

Principle 5. Encourage Flexibility at All Levels

Each State has unique challenges in serving increased numbers of private forest landowners and increasingly diverse communities. Landscape approaches can prove most beneficial when a State and its partners have the freedom and support to tailor their responses to the natural resource challenges they face. Flexibility and open mindedness should be encouraged and supported among all participants in landscape stewardship approaches.

Section 1: The Importance and Context of Landscape Stewardship Checklist and Notes

Ask yourself:

What are some unique aspects of your community that can benefit from landscape stewardship?

What challenges of context or history will you face in your community?

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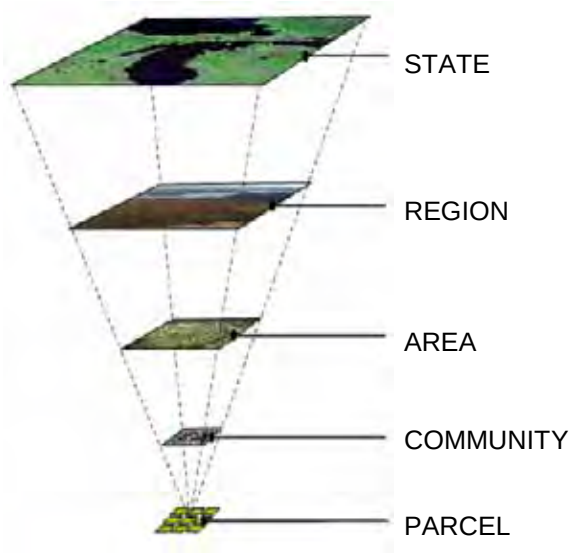
Section 2. Identifying a Project Area

Landscape Scale: How Big is our Landscape?

The term "landscape" means many things to different people, from vast regional areas to a constricted viewshed to "the bushes around my house." A landscape approach to forest stewardship will include many landowners, may cross political boundaries, and will preferably focus on all or part of a priority area or issue identified in the State Forest Action Plan document(s). Within each priority area are a number of communities, and each encompasses a number of forested parcels and stakeholders upon which stewardship outcomes ultimately depend.



Consequently, the actual extent of a landscape will vary depending on the issues and objectives identified when initially scoping the landscape stewardship effort and the approach taken to address those issues and objectives. Landscape approaches will be described in the coming pages. Allow the landscape's boundaries to be identified by the community but be aware of any local resource constraints that may exist.

The ownership pattern may be more important than size in defining the landscape because landscape stewardship involves engaging communities and landowners. The ability to effectively communicate with forest landowners should therefore be a primary consideration in defining the landscape context. For example, participants in a landscape stewardship project will need to define and agree upon the issues their efforts will address.

Benefits of "Keeping It Local"

- Efficient – better match of public policy with private needs
- Equitable – those who benefit pay; those who pay benefit
- Democratic – individuals have a stronger voice; fosters greater participation; brings citizens and government together
- Effective – resource solutions are tailored to specific issues

Landscape stewardship approaches should incorporate the entire landscape within a defined plan area, regardless of land use or ownership. Private forest owners do not exist in isolation. Meeting their forest land ownership objectives may well depend on community level land-use policies or agricultural practices within the landscape. Conversely, the management and condition of private forest land may impact the social, economic, or environmental conditions of the wider community.

Consider

It may be helpful to go back and look at the data layers that fed into the State Forest Action Plan and caused "priority areas" to pop out. This will help explain to stakeholders why an area was identified as a priority. It might also be helpful to examine the pixels on the map. For example, a large county may have been identified as a priority, but there may in fact be specific areas within the county that are more critical than others, which the landscape effort may want to focus on.

Consider identifying "regions." Many State forest management programs have already identified large geographic areas, or "regions," within their boundaries that are defined by common social, economic, and/or environmental issues and conditions. Regional-scale assessments are vital, especially in larger States, in the development of resource solutions applicable to landscape stewardship plans, as well as individual landowner stewardship plans.

Triage your opportunities. There are likely to be a number of priority areas your State will be interested in. If you look at opportunities for community engagement across these areas, some may have stewardship-related projects underway, others may be ready for immediate coordination and engagement, while in others it may be best to plant some seeds and come back later to engage more fully.

Deciding which Landscape Approach is Best

While your group is determining which geographic area or management topic the landscape project will cover, you will also want to determine how to implement forest stewardship at a landscape scale. Two approaches capitalize on the presence of communities within the priority area. Both focus on the needs and objectives of those communities; to be successful, both must effectively engage private forest owners in forest stewardship.

If your landscape can be explained best by using a polygon on a map, a community of place approach should dominate your planning efforts. If the priority area is under the jurisdiction of one or more local governments with the capacity to set land-use policy—to tax, regulate, or otherwise influence private land ownership—it may be best to work through that governance structure when developing a landscape approach to forest stewardship. This is especially true if the community of place has identified social, economic, or environmental issues that are clearly connected to forest resources in and around the community.

If your landscape project is based on a type of activity happening, rather than where it is, a community of interest approach may be right for your group. Issues such as insects and diseases, invasive species, forest parcelization, or the wildland-urban interface are further complicated by broader resource challenges such as declining water quality or ineffective property tax policies. Private forest land management simply does not operate in a world unto itself. Convening a community of interest around (a) the issues and opportunities identified in the State's Forest Action Plan, (b) the issues and opportunities shared by a significant number of residents (ideally private forest owners), or (c) the common ground between a and b within a given area is a great way to kick off a landscape stewardship initiative within your State.

In the following sections of this guide, we will detail the recommended framework for organizing landscape stewardship approaches. It includes four inter-related phases:

- **Planning** – With a stakeholder group, develop a common vision and desired future conditions. Further develop goals and specific steps to reach that future. Focus on results and suggest the means to achieve those results.
- **Coordination** – Once the plan is completed, build on existing relationships, foster new partnerships, and begin to assign work through agreed-upon goals and strategies.
- **Implementation** – Collaboratively put the plan into action by expanding stewardship's influence among landowners and their communities; expand the shared use of resources to increase sustainable forest practices on the ground.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** – Track the accomplishments and evaluate the effectiveness of program actions and investments. Then communicate ways to make adaptive adjustments to increase the rate of success.

This is not necessarily a linear process but is meant to describe the overall pathway to successfully implementing landscape stewardship. Although developing a landscape stewardship plan is the first major phase, one should anticipate or begin to develop the other three phases during the preparation of the plan. Furthermore, feedback loops should be designed to make improvements in each of the four major phases, and these should be integrated back into an evolving landscape stewardship initiative.

Reconsider/Refine/Target the Scale of Your Landscape Stewardship Project Areas

Priority areas identified in State Forest Action Plans and other areas of interest can be very large. Large areas do not lend themselves well to working with landowners. It is a real possibility that in some regions of the region served by Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, trying to take a landscape approach to forest stewardship in large priority areas might provoke a "Big Brother is trying to take away our private property rights" type of response. This can be counter productive and set an organization back several years in terms of fostering positive relationships with forest landowners. In the case of a large priority area, the best course of action may be to divide the larger priority area into smaller project areas if the issue being addressed can be dealt with at a smaller scale.

Project areas should be small enough that the landowners and communities involved can relate to it and not feel threatened by the project. Opinions vary, but some who have used this approach recommend that project areas should be kept to less than 10,000 acres. Size notwithstanding, the idea is to try and work with no more than a few hundred landowners (with 10+ acre parcels) in any project. A small project area will also show evidence of the increased level of management happening within it more quickly, which will allow the partners to demonstrate success sooner—hopefully leading to easier start-ups in neighboring areas, and perhaps attracting new partners. Small project areas are also a way to help manage demand created by marketing efforts to recruit new landowners. It is easier to modify publicity levels for a smaller area and thus modify expectations of service.

Another consideration that relates to handling service demand, and to project size, is the level of media saturation a landscape partnership can direct for a particular project. Targeting messages repeatedly within a defined media market within a given timeframe is more effective than sending out the same message fewer times across a wider area (such as when State agencies distribute

statewide news releases). The ability to hit a "message saturation" level within the target audience should be an important consideration in establishing the project scope and size.

Choosing where to start working in a large priority area can be dictated by partner interest and opinion, or in a more objective way. Dr. Paul Barten of the University of Massachusetts and the Forest Service's Forest-To-Faucet partnership has developed a process that uses a geographic information system (GIS) to identify key ownership tracts within a larger priority area (see http://www.forest-to-faucet.org/).

> "Planning committees should explore and examine the range of ecological, social, and economic assets and issues in and around their project area. Some core questions to consider in an inventory and assessment for a landscape stewardship planning process might include: What is the environmental context of our community—geological, ecological, and hydrological? What are its historic and current economic and social patterns as well as emerging trends at various scales (state, regional, and local)? How does my community or neighborhood fit into this story? How will landowners see their property fit in this story? And lastly, define what data are really relevant to the project; what knowledge is going to drive your decisionmaking?
>
> "Answers to these kinds of questions are essential to properly inform a group of stakeholders who are developing a sustainable forest vision and the steps needed to achieve that vision. Encourage planning committee members to ask repeatedly, "SO WHAT?" They should also be encouraged to use a "story" approach (not gathering data for the sake of the data but rather to help build a compelling 'story' about the landscape and why action is needed) as they develop their analysis. A set of ecological, economic, and social conclusions should be generally agreed upon by the planning committee before it moves into developing the long-range vision.
>
> "Resource managers from public agencies should be encouraged to help interpret the inventory and assessment work so that the planning committee can more effectively apply their acquired knowledge to the process."

"The key to effectiveness in today's world is synthesis of information into coherent packages."

—Jack Ward Thomas, 1999

How Should a Landscape Stewardship Project Boundary be Defined?

There are many variables that need to be considered when determining the area for a landscape stewardship initiative. The size of a project may vary depending on whether it is for a community of place or for a community of interest. A community-of-place effort may cover a town, township, county, or other local geopolitical unit(s) of 20,000 or 30,000 acres. In contrast, a community-of-interest project for a forest health issue may, for example, *begin* with a very large area, perhaps 1 million acres or more. Watersheds, ecological areas, and other jurisdictional boundaries can help determine the size of a landscape-scale effort.

Budgets and available staff are factors that should be considered too. Above all, the process to select the area should be deliberate and purposeful. Each community of place or interest needs to determine its own geographic boundaries within which to focus its efforts.

Care should be taken to not make landscape stewardship projects so large that it is no longer feasible to target individual landowners and connect their objectives with those of the landscape plan. The "community context" must be preserved, as defined by the community members. The State Forest Action Plan can be useful in initially defining landscape stewardship project boundaries.

Tip

GIS – Use a Geographic Information System (GIS) as a tool to inform and support decisions, not make them. Analyze and overlay land ownership patterns in both an ecological and hydrological context. Review the data and how it was used in the State Forest Action Plan. Study, use, and work with the maps. Have good reasons for selecting landscape stewardship project areas.

Note: The Role of Individual Forest Stewardship Plans

Not all lands are of equal importance, value, or function in a landscape. Strategically targeting private forest land to achieve community objectives is a fundamental element of landscape stewardship. This does not mean that interested landowners with lands outside of priority areas are not to be served. They should be. And if an individual landowner wants a stewardship plan, most States will likely decide to support that request.

Individual plans written within the landscape stewardship area should, at a minimum, acknowledge the priority issues relevant to the landscape plan. Ideally, individual plans should be written in the context of the landscape stewardship effort, so that the landowner has a greater appreciation of how his or her property contributes to the greater resource needs of the community. And, individual landowners will chose to implement their personal management objectives in a way that is complementary to the overall community's resource management needs. So, in essense, landscape plans do not replace individual landowner plans; they serve as a framework, where necessary, to guide individual landowners in their management choices so that more informed decisions can be made on the individual property.

The capacity of program staff can be increased because all landowners do not require individual plans to be successful. In many cases, a landscape plan, accompanied by a walk in the woods with a forester, can adequately motivate and influence a landowner to make informed management decisions. "Streamlined" plans (see appendix F), provided to the landowner with the Landscape Plan attached, may also serve to meet the needs of State tax programs, Tree Farm certification, or financial assistance programs. And, a streamlined plan for an individual landowner would take considerably less staff time to prepare.

Section 2: Identifying a Project Area Checklist and Notes

£ Identify a community of place or a community of interest as the focal point for a landscape stewardship project.

Ask yourself:

What accidents of history or geography will affect your project boundaries?

Who should you recruit to help you consider the complexities of possible project areas?

Section 3. Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders

In addition to the people you consulted as you chose a project area, you will also want to convene a group or committee to shape the project plan. It is important that this group's members represent a variety of interests and expertise. They will become the group in charge of developing the content of the plan, driving it through to final approval, and supporting its distribution to the community.

Plans developed by diverse groups tend to include and more effectively address the broad range of issues and challenges facing a community and its forest resources. These plans are more flexible and more permanent than those created by only like-minded individuals. Involving a variety of people helps ensure that key interests and issues are not left out of the process and increases the chances that long-lasting solutions will be selected.

Investing significant amounts of time and energy into building a solid public participation program for a landscape-scale planning process will pay dividends throughout the planning and implementation phases. As you recruit a project committee, be honest about the time commitment you will ask of your group members. Will they meet twice monthly or quarterly? Will they be responsible for every aspect of the project or just serve as advisors? Much of this will be up to your agency's commitment of resources to the project and should be clearly communicated during recruitment. You will want to engage one or two people from each group to be part of your standing committee, but you will also want to be able to communicate regularly with many members of the groups to gain their opinions and later approval.

Key stakeholders that should be involved in preparing a landscape stewardship plan are listed below.

Landowners. Develop a list of influential landowners who are active in forestry in the project area and who have lands in strategic locations. Many, but not all, will have a forest stewardship plan. Check your private forest management database as well as mailing lists from conservation organizations in the project area.

Community Leaders. There are often community leaders (elected or appointed officials, government staff, or active citizens) that have spoken out about conserving natural resources in the community of place or interest. They are obvious leaders to tap into for both ideas and involvement.

Foresters. Not only should State agency foresters be involved, but field foresters working for industry, conservation districts, tribes, nongovernmental organizations, and other entities should be included as well. Active involvement of consulting foresters will be particularly useful because they really know the landowners. They can identify those landowners most likely to get engaged in active forest management at the landscape level.

Loggers and Forest Industry Representatives. Loggers and forest industries have a strong interest in private forest lands and their management. Also consider wood artisans and nontraditional forest product entrepreneurs such as mushroom and ginseng cultivators. Check with local and regional economic development staff, chambers of commerce, conservation districts, and extension agents to help locate people in nontraditional forest industries.

Environmental, Sporting, and Outdoor Organizations. Hunting, fishing, and trapping organizations; lake associations; watershed groups; and others can be great partners. They often

have shared interests in keeping forests as forests and other related conservation values. Some may even have significant amounts of money that can support implementation efforts in the project area.

Nongovernmental Organizations and Nonprofit Organizations. There is a wide range of nonprofit organizations, such as land trusts and educational associations, that can be enlisted in the planning process. They may be able to help support other functions, too, from organizational and project development to grant writing and more.

Agency Staff. Seek out a range of natural resource professionals from a variety of resource agencies and educational institutions, including extension and conservation district staff. Ask them to provide their expert technical knowledge in the landscape-scale planning process.

Some community partners and stakeholders may participate, collaborate, coordinate, and share resources throughout the project, from initiation to final reporting. Others, however, may engage only during certain phases of the project, or for only a short time span or specific activities. These people may participate when your committee moves to engage the wider community, as described in Section 4. People that fall into this other, more intermittent group may include the following:

Elected Officials. When working within a priority landscape, it is important to have buy-in from elected officials. They may be contacted early in project planning to exchange ideas and obtain official acknowledgement. They may not need to be active participants but do need to know a community-based effort is happening. They may or may not want to be involved, but the courtesy of a phone call is an absolute must. If one of the goals of the project is to change local regulations to enhance forest stewardship objectives, elected officials will need to be re-engaged in a different way during the implementation phase of the project. Always invite elected officials to share in successful projects.

Keystone Volunteers. Energetic supporters can be recruited for single projects or long term. Retirees, school groups, or a scout troop may be appropriate partners during public education, service, or demonstration events. These people may become your greatest asset. If someone turns up who may be around to support the project for a while, cultivate your relationship with them and be sure to engage them in decisionmaking so that they have true ownership in the project.

Volunteers. Groups of volunteers and individuals will come and go during your landscape project. Volunteers are often process centered—they want to do something to further the project immediately and may not be around for the next steps. This is okay, but it's important not to be slowed by trying to accommodate many different sets of volunteers. You may encourage them to come in for a mass mailing or to provide logistical support to an educational event. You may want to have a few projects ready to execute when people volunteer. This both increases project visibility in the community and can further your goals.

Local Professionals. Private foresters and other natural resource professionals who work regularly within a priority landscape can be a source of knowledge about landowner needs and attitudes. They may be willing to donate some of their professional time, particularly if it is mutually beneficial, or if their landowner client chooses to participate in some implementation action associated with the landscape plan.

Land Use Commissions. Community boards are already populated with volunteers and have many issues to discuss, but they can be supportive and a potential source of project participation. Communicate with all related boards and commissions in the area to at least let them know that a landscape planning initiative is underway. Secure board participation and support from boards in other towns, and establish links among communities with similar issues.

Existing Networks. Identify, foster, and utilize social networks—neighbors, friends, and family—for information transfer. Community of interest or topical networks, even broad online forums, may have some local applicability.

Landowners. While you will want to engage a few landowners or groups of landowners to be involved in the project from start to finish, it will be advantageous to have other landowners cycle into the project for things such as site visits, testimonials, and informal surveys to ensure that the project will continue to serve the entire community of landowners.

Tip

Potential stakeholder groups and community leaders who are involved with landscape stewardship projects often look for guest speakers for their meetings. Encourage agency staff to attend meetings of local woodland councils, lake associations, sportsmen clubs, and other conservation organizations, which often occur on weekends and evenings. Individual phone calls to and visits with organizational leaders are also effective.

Once stakeholder groups are engaged and your project committee is formed, you must take care of some critical logistics.

Though there are many people involved in decisionmaking, typically only one person writes a landscape stewardship plan. Often the person who is facilitating a planning process is the one who prepares the plan document. Staff from State or local agencies, or private consultants, may lead the facilitation. Finding a good facilitator and writer should not be overlooked. A good planner:

- Is a good writer
- Is qualified to facilitate and is comfortable doing so
- Can clearly describe process concepts
- Interprets data and helps the group develop sound conclusions
- Has the resources and motivation to successfully complete the task; this person should be paid for their work.

Hiring a consultant requires some planning of its own.

- Establish a clear need before hiring the consultant. Do not use the consultant-hiring effort as a process to develop the scope of work.
- Establish the budget and timeframe parameters.
- Determine the consultant selection process. See the following **Consider** box.
- Establish a good working relationship up front. Interview and negotiate fairly.
- Refine and confirm the scope of work with the consultant before beginning planning. They should have input in the planning process.
- Confirm roles and responsibilities of the service forester, facilitator, planning committee, and chairperson.
- Insist on regular communications throughout the process.

Consider

Consider two options for hiring a planning consultant – the competitive approach or sole source (direct) approach.

Competitive selection process: Depending on the project's cost and the amount of public funding to be used, you may be required to competitively bid out the services of a planning consultant to develop a landscape stewardship plan. Be sure to check appropriate State laws or agency policies related to this. Develop a request for a proposal packet and distribute it widely. Be clear about the materials needed, timelines, roles and responsibilities, and budgets, among other considerations. If there is a very large pool of interested consultants, you may need to set up a request for qualifications to prescreen potential applicants.

Sole source: If there are no mandates for a public bidding process and it seems like landscape stewardship is so new that there is not an abundance of qualified individuals or firms to do the work, you may be able to work directly with a known individual or firm. Think of people who you have worked with in the past who have written good plans and can facilitate a planning process (you'll need more than just a meeting facilitator; you need a good writer). Work with them to set a clear scope and budget with a list of deliverables and timelines.

You may wish to look for more information in the following source:
Selecting and Retaining a Planning Consultant. Erik Damian Kelly. PAS Report #443. American Planning Association (APA). www.planning.org

Give your consulting facilitator data, maps, and other community information to help him or her succeed at their task. Your consultant should not be expected to take notes of the proceedings while they are facilitating; these are both consuming tasks.

Once you have identified your stakeholders, engaged community groups, and hired a consultant, schedule your first project meeting with plenty of lead time so that everyone can be there. At the first meeting, review the big picture in relation to forest resources and review the basic steps in the planning process. Then ask participants to describe challenges they are facing in their community and help them make the connection between these challenges and private forest management. These two steps are critical because they establish why you are asking them to participate in a landscape project and why your committee members are there and what they expect to gain by participating.

Solicit both short- and long-term outcomes that participants want to see. Make sure to record their ideas.

Set a regular schedule for the entire planning process with a schedule of topics to be addressed and tasks to be completed at each meeting. Ask participants when and how it is best to meet. Meet according to their schedule and locations, even if it means nights or weekends. A landscape stewardship plan should take about 9 to 12 months to prepare.

Ask the group to select a chairperson from the committee to run the meetings. The chair should be someone who is level headed, well respected, and passionate about forest-related issues. The chair can provide leadership for the planning effort, facilitate collaboration, and keep all individuals focused on the task at hand.

Tip

Feed the committee. It should be good, quality food, but not too formal. Coffee or the preferred beverages of the local culture should also be provided.

Good public participation goes well beyond forming a planning committee. Integrate a series of input-gathering methods into the process that not only provide useful feedback but are also timely and cost effective. Talk to your State's planning agency about resources for designing a solid public participation program. Ask the planning committee to help your facilitator design and refine this program to complement the local culture and traditions in the community or project area.

Once the planning process is complete, you need to reconvene some or all community partners to coordinate plan or project activities as the project moves forward. This reconvening will also be useful during the planning, coordination, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation phases.

It's important to keep people engaged during all steps of the process. You may want to return to this section on identifying and engaging stakeholders throughout your landscape stewardship plan process. Relationships can shift, people move into or out of the project area, and situations change over time.

Section 3: Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders Checklist and Notes

£ Convene a stakeholder group with a mutual interest in conserving forest land within the community.

Ask yourself:

Who are the stakeholders in your area?

What community luminaries must you engage in order to gain wide participation and later approval?

Section 4: Communicating Landscape Stewardship to the Wider Community

A Community-Based Perspective for Forest Stewardship

Since the 1970s, public agencies have been pushed to "do more with less" and justify that their services are actually needed. Generally, success is seen as increasing the number of program participants. More progressive agencies adopt a marketing orientation that focuses on identifying clients' needs and creating programs that deliver benefits that meet those needs.

This "market-based" approach focuses on direct users of an agency's services, and nonusers are typically excluded since they are seen as "nonconsumers." But if nonusers representing the majority in most communities sense that they are not receiving anything of value from an agency, they are unlikely to support the use of public tax dollars to fund that agency's services.

> "My hope is that together we can foster a greater appreciation for our forests and that all Americans, regardless of where they live, see the quality of their lives and the quality of our forests as inseparable."
>
> —USDA Secretary Vilsack
> August 14, 2009

The community-based perspective takes the view that "nonusers" are in fact "consumers" of conservation services. It makes the distinction between services that are part of a conservation agency's "core mission"—sustaining societal benefits from forest resources—and those that are part of its "specialized mission"—its more proprietary activities, such as landowner assistance. Although assisting forest landowners is an important element of forest stewardship, it is sometimes seen as using public resources so that a minority of residents can improve their land or lower their tax burden. This is likely to result in a community giving these services a low priority when measured against the critical economic, health, safety, and welfare issues with which decisionmakers are confronted.

Therefore, the community-based perspective focuses on the benefits of forest conservation that contribute to societal goals. Implementing a landscape approach to forest stewardship requires that we expand and adapt the "market-based" approach to forest conservation to effectively engage the nonuser community and its decisionmakers.

The Benefits of a Broader Constituency for Forest Stewardship

Taxpayers require evidence that they are receiving a return on their investment. It isn't enough that a public agency can demonstrate that it delivers services well; it has to demonstrate that these services contribute to the community's general welfare.

Broadening the focus of forest stewardship to include community or societal benefits that are important to a wide spectrum of residents aligns the program with the community's vision and goals. If forest stewardship is not seen to be delivering community-wide benefits that are important to residents and their decisionmakers, then it is likely to be disconnected from the greater community welfare. A sense of connection builds a local constituency, which may then provide financial or political support.

The guiding philosophy of most decisionmakers is "the greatest good for the greatest number." They are likely to believe that private landowners benefit from forest stewardship and that there are few, if any, spin-off benefits to the community as a whole. But forest stewardship is no different from other

social services such as education, health services, transportation, police, and fire protection for which officials regularly acknowledge significant societal benefits.

To gain the support of decisionmakers and nonusers in the community, an agency must provide a convincing answer to the fundamental marketing question: "What is in it for them?" Broader community support for forest conservation will likely depend on agencies being able to demonstrate that conservation programs are effectively and efficiently addressing important issues using terms that residents and their decisionmakers easily understand. Increasing support for forest conservation is based on publicizing the off-site benefits that accrue to community residents more than the on-site benefits that accrue to forest landowners.

Consider

Community Benefits of Forest Conservation

Forests Contribute to Economic Prosperity

- Attract tourists
- Attract businesses
- Attract new residents (retirees, for example)
- Enhance real estate value
- Reduce taxes
- Stimulate financial activity/sales
- Reduce energy costs

Forests Help Alleviate Social Problems

- Promote cultural & historical preservation
- Preserve/regenerate community character
- Alleviate unemployment distress
- Enhance quality of life

Forests Provide Environmental Services

- Protect drinking water supplies
- Improve flood control
- Provide clean air
- Preserve biological diversity
- Mitigate climate change impacts

A Conservation Marketing Campaign to Engage the Prime Prospects

Of course, the on-site benefits to landowners are indeed numerous. Once we have a good sense of the "social landscape" of landscape stewardship, we're ready to begin our marketing campaign to engage our prime prospect landowners. As we learned in appendix H, these are landowners who are not currently engaged in managing their forests (they don't have management plans, they don't consult foresters, and they don't participate in programs such as cost-sharing or conservation easements), yet they think managing their forest land is a good idea *and* they are interested in doing so.

In its broadest sense, marketing involves designing and promoting products that meet people's needs. Our marketing campaign will focus on making our clients aware of the fact that our product—forest stewardship—can help them meet their land ownership objectives, then "completing the transaction." And this is an important point: marketing is about the transaction. When all is said and done, there must be an action. Informing and educating are important, but you are really after a specific behavioral change on the part of private forest landowners as their contribution to the transaction.

This may mean helping them enroll in a cost-share program, plant more trees, or get a management plan. Much of the outreach we do on a daily basis is, in fact, marketing.

Conservation marketing promotes the use of conservation products and services that are relevant and responsive to landowner needs, resulting in societal benefits that address the community's conservation priorities. This "convergence of interest" is based on the adoption of appropriate management activities on private forest land that also contribute to the social, economic, and environmental goals in the stewardship project area.

The Benefits of Conservation Marketing

- Engages more, and different, landowners.
- Establishes better relationships with key media partners.
- Leverages efforts and funding to create outcomes beyond any single partner's capacity.
- Builds landowner awareness and trust in partner agencies and organizations.
- Responds to local conditions and concerns.

Our marketing campaign begins with forming the project marketing team and designating a marketing manager. Think about the participants and skills needed on the marketing team. Ideally, you'll be drawing from organizations and individuals who are already engaged in the project. The team should have these skills represented: natural resource knowledge of the area, marketing knowledge, outreach knowledge, resources and networks to design and implement the marketing plan, and a manager to guide this aspect of project implementation.

The marketing manager is an important position. Someone has to have the day-to-day responsibility of moving the effort forward. Bear in mind that in many areas, the most respected source of information on forestry issues is the county or regional Service Forester. Involving them in the conservation marketing effort brings "local authenticity" as well as knowledge of effective communication channels with landowners and other partners you're seeking to engage.

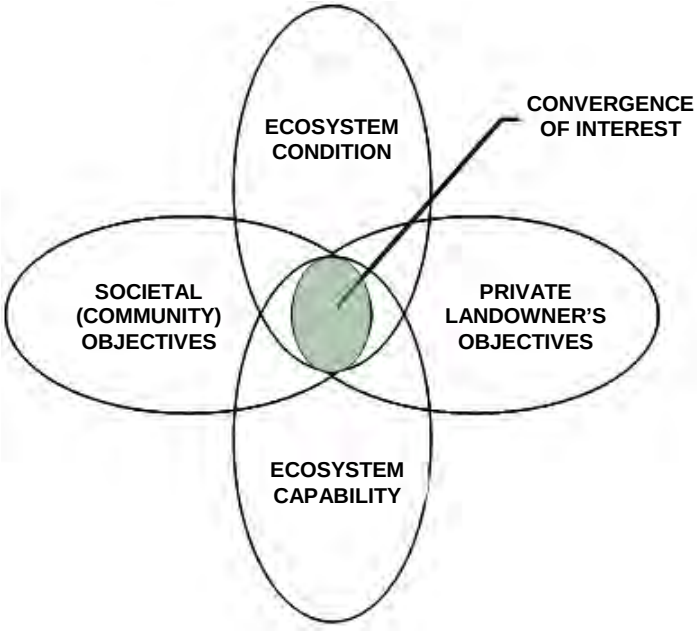
A good option is to follow the tested approach to conservation marketing developed by the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative (SFFI), which is found in their *Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively* (TELE). See appendix I for a template of the pages you will find on the interactive TELE Web site.

Engaging Landowners in Landscape Stewardship

To be successful, landscape stewardship projects whose goals require results from on-the-ground management activities must engage private landowners.

State forestry agencies have a long, successful history of working with private forest landowners. And we will continue working with landowners, albeit in a somewhat different way, benefiting from the collaborative framework we've fostered through landscape stewardship.

For example, following an approach that begins with convening a community of place or a community of interest, and seeking to address its social, economic, or environmental issues with resource solutions, the forest landowner becomes the "client" of the community. The community has societal needs that can be addressed by managing the

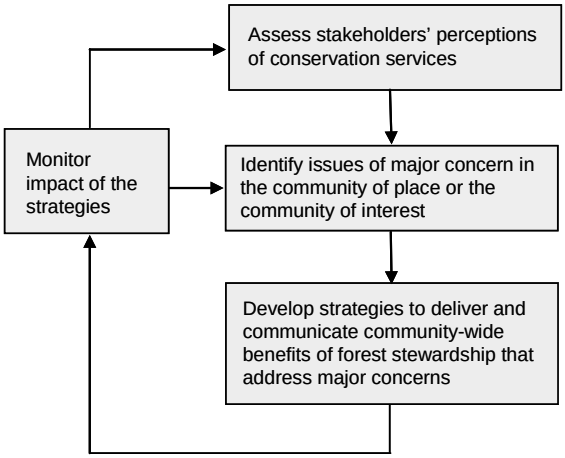


condition of private forest land. In return, the community has to determine what it can deliver to the landowner that falls within the "convergence of interest" and is of sufficient value to complete a transaction.

The role of the State forestry agency is to facilitate this transaction using the tools described in this and the previous section, as well as the more detailed information provided in appendix H, which explains a landowner segmentation scheme developed by the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative.

Repositioning Forest Stewardship through Community Engagement

Defining a public program in terms of how it can help alleviate or align itself with socially important concerns is called positioning. For landscape stewardship, our position refers to the place that forest conservation services occupy in the minds of community residents and their decisionmakers—relative to their perception of other services that are competing for public funds. Implementing landscape stewardship is likely to require repositioning forest conservation so that it is perceived as helping to alleviate problems concerning the community of place or the community of interest and its decisionmakers.


Assess stakeholders' perceptions of conservation services
Identify issues of major concern in the community of place or the community of interest
Develop strategies to deliver and communicate community-wide benefits of forest stewardship that address major concerns
Monitor impact of the strategies

When forest conservation is so positioned, conservation services will be positively perceived as part of the solution to a community's problems, rather than as peripheral services that benefit a few landowners. An indicator of an agency's success in accomplishing this is to observe how central forest conservation is in the decisionmakers' dialogue. "What can forest conservation contribute to resolving our problems more efficiently and effectively than other available services?"

Effective positioning requires an understanding of which benefits are important to stakeholders, and then a focus on delivering those benefits and communicating the effectiveness of their impacts to stakeholders. The end goal of repositioning is that communities will *invest in solutions* to their most pressing problems.

A successfully positioned public program will clearly communicate the value of its contributions and the nature of its business. It will:

- Guide the development of strategies and actions.
- Guide agency and program organization.
- Become the agency's "brand," defining its business.
- Provide a compelling vision that all stakeholders—residents, decisionmakers, and agency employees—can commit to and get excited about. For example, "Family forests support livable communities."

Finally, an agency must have (or be able to develop) the capacity to deliver the benefits it promises, and ensure that the benefits resonate and connect with stakeholders. Agencies must be realistic from the outset about what can and cannot be changed. If a position is superficial and neither reasonable

nor credible in the eyes of employees or stakeholders, it will not survive and will adversely impact the agency.

Agencies that successfully embrace the community approach to forest stewardship are likely to see positive outcomes, including a better understanding of the significance of forest stewardship, justification for allocating public funds to forest stewardship activities, and guidance from leadership for prioritizing forest stewardship activities.

Getting Plan Approval

Before any landscape stewardship plans are prepared, develop a plan approval process. While this process should provide for adequate public review and input procedures, it should not be overly complicated or burdensome.

Engage planning committees in the plan review and approval process. There is a wide range of activities that they can pursue to increase the community's awareness of and engagement in the landscape stewardship project, which is one of the potential benefits of a public review and comment process.

Ask planning committee members to provide input on the methods used to invite public comment. Some methods include direct mailings of the plan, Web site announcements, notices in conservation newsletters, radio and TV spots, press releases, and similar outreach methods.

A review period typically established for many types of plans will run from 30 to 45 days. After the review period is completed and comments are received, the facilitator and/or the plan writer should prepare a written response to all comments. The planning committee should review and discuss the comments and the responses, and decide which to include in the final document.

Final review and approval protocols are largely concerned with funding sources, so spell out this process at the beginning of the project and make sure it is understood by all participants.

Tip

Encourage your planning committee members to help distribute the approved plan in the community. Provide them with information (maps and PowerPoint presentations, among others) that makes it easy for them to present the landscape plan to other groups and organizations. This can help increase support for the plan while engaging your committee members and the community.

Section 4: Communicating Landscape Stewardship to the Wider Community Notes

- £ Identify issues of major concern in the community of place or community of interest.
- £ Develop strategies to deliver and communicate community-wide benefits of forest stewardship that address major concerns.
- £ Identify prime prospect landowners in the landscape project area.
- £ Develop the Landscape Plan approval process.

Ask yourself:

Where is the likely “convergence of interest” between private landowner objectives and societal needs in your project area?

What partners could help market the Landscape Stewardship Project?

How can you align yourself to have a successful Landscape Plan approval process?

Section 5: The Elements of Planning

Landscape stewardship starts with good planning. By thinking ahead and being proactive, public and private sector resource managers working together at a landscape level can significantly increase the number of opportunities to more effectively and efficiently serve communities and landowners alike. Identifying and establishing shared goals and objectives through planning will increase coordination and improve implementation and monitoring. You need to develop landscape stewardship plans so that planning is integrated into the later steps of coordination, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Planning documents should provide enough depth and substance to be useful in formulating policy. Describe a desired future in compelling terms and provide a meaningful description of what must happen for the stakeholders' vision to be fulfilled. Make planning document language simple and easy to understand so your plan has value to decisionmakers when they are faced with critical issues.

It is absolutely vital that a framework of real-world ideas is organized with sufficient clarity and depth that the intended *users* of the plan know what actions should be taken over time. A plan should have at least three levels of nested statements ranging from general to more specific direction. We suggest the following framework for landscape stewardship plans: 1) vision, 2) goals, and 3) objectives.

Setting the Stage…

Our vision is…
Goal 1: *Promote …*
Objective 1: *Develop…*
Objective 2: *Explore…*
Objective 3: *Assist…*
Goal 2: *Encourage…*
Objective 1: *Prepare…*
Objective 2: *Contact…*
Objective 3: *Attend…*

Vision statements are broad-reaching statements that describe or frame the long-term outcome or desired future conditions for forests and related resources in a landscape stewardship project area. Articulate your vision in a series of short but well-written statements, often in the present tense. Include visual or graphic depictions if desired. An effective vision is grounded in reality yet inspirational in nature to drive significant and positive change.

The vision should intertwine ecological, economic, and social aspects as they relate to natural resources and their management. Communities armed with relevant information will produce powerful descriptions of what they want for their future and how their forests are a vital part of that future. State agencies have a primary role in supporting their communities in developing the technical resources and knowledge needed to create your project vision.

Goals are statements that outline broad directions that should be pursued to support the attainment of your vision. Develop specific goals for social, economic, and environmental directions as framed in the vision statements. Goals address a 10- to 20-year timeframe. Key words in goal statements include encourage, promote, conserve, restore, enhance, and protect. Vision statements may have several goals.

Objectives provide the third level of direction in the plan's framework. Objectives are statements that are even more action oriented than goals. They should be SMART: **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic, and **t**imely. Objectives address a shorter timeframe than do goals, perhaps 1 to

5 years, and describe actions you'll take to reach goals and realize your vision. Key words in objective statements include organize, develop, design, construct, cooperate, assist, educate, revive, acquire, and regulate. Goals may have one or more objectives. Examples of objectives and other framework statements are provided in the case studies in appendices J and K.

Tip

Get knowledgeable people to be present and available at key decisionmaking moments. Make sure neighbors, volunteers, and officials have information on conservation contacts, are aware of conservation techniques, and know where to go for assistance. Tie priorities to a person they can call.

Thinking through community-based resource issues at a landscape scale gives you and your stakeholders a chance to be more proactive in shaping your collective future. With the help of a good planning process that strives to be both rigorous and meaningful in its language, you will take a big step toward engaging more stakeholders who will find ways to work together more effectively. You need to encourage your partners to embrace robust yet realistic planning processes. And you need to support the preparation of *well-written* plans that will guide decisionmaking in a meaningful way.

Tip

Create a meaningful community forest vision with alternative scenarios. Usually one or more future directions can be devised and described to help advance a community toward its desired future. Different assumptions can be made about ecological, economic, or social trends; funding resources; landownership patterns; or other types of forecasts. Use maps as well as aerial and panoramic photographs as tools to dream about what the landscape should look like. Ask participants to use markers to sketch out their ideas directly onto the maps. Or ask them to take photos of the good, the bad, and the ugly landscapes in their area. Ask them what they like and dislike. Consider using data tables with different assumptions to forecast possible outcomes.

This approach can be very complex and overwhelming given the seemingly infinite directions the future can take, so keep it simple. By working through a collaborative approach with State agencies and other partners, most communities can develop two or three alternative scenarios relating to their future forests. The alternative scenario approach can generate greater interest and dialogue by stakeholders, local leaders, and citizens. Increased dialogue is foundational to engaging more landowners and their communities in landscape stewardship.

By the time a project has advanced to the implementation stage, you will have identified the purpose and desired outcomes of the project, established a clear understanding of "what success looks like", know what items will be tracked or monitored to measure success, and will have a timeline in place. In addition, you will have outlined action steps to address objectives; these must now be assigned or delegated to individuals or groups who will commit to accomplishing them. In short, who is going to do what, and when are they going to do it?

Now that your community has developed a vision for its forests with a detailed course of actions to take to achieve that vision, many questions should begin to arise about how to make these ideas operational. How are you really going to get all this done?

Too often plans devote little if any text or direction for these management phases. Properly organized planning committees should include representatives from many of the organizations and agencies, if not the specific individuals, who would be expected to take a lead in implementing the plan.

Tip

During the landscape-scale planning effort, seek out existing plans and their related partner groups that may be in place within the landscape. Some examples include comprehensive plans; watershed plans; natural resource assessments; community land use plans; master plans for public land (Federal, State, and local); and of course, your State's Forest Action Plan. Planning committees should try to understand not only what forest management plans and policies are in place and why, but also the policies and issues in related fields of land use, wildlife, agriculture, transportation, water resources, and economic development that can affect the mission of keeping forests as forests. Consult everything from disaster preparedness plans to economic development plans for a full picture of your community's resources.

Coordination and Implementation

The brainstorming nature of planning usually results in a long list of ideas as well as a heightened set of expectations. This can be not only exciting but daunting, overwhelming, and frustrating to service providers and landowners alike. It is helpful if program managers and facilitators remind their partners that implementing landscape stewardship is not a 1- or 2-year proposition.

Developing this perspective can help alleviate some concerns and help develop clear roles and responsibilities for coordination. Good planning processes include discussions on how the work proposed in the plan will be coordinated. The all-lands approach calls for expanding the dialogue and reaching agreement on who will do what, when, and with what resources.

First, facilitators should guide their planning committees to discuss existing working relationships. Next, they should ask their planning committee members to identify new working relationships and functions in the context of the vision, goals, and objectives. The project plan will almost certainly create new roles and expectations. The narrative on coordination in a landscape stewardship plan should encompass and document the general roles and responsibilities of each of the major service providers. This role-clarifying effort should help identify lead and supporting roles in implementation.

Good plans also include a proposed schedule of implementation activities, which may be located in the plan or as an accompanying document. Include a brief description of the major programs that will be used to implement the plan. Insert a table that summarizes the plan's goals and objectives with columns that identify the general timeframe within which each objective should be met, its priority amongst other objectives, and lead and supporting partners. Also add information on estimated costs and potential funding sources to the implementation schedule. This table format is a simple way to export the goals and objectives from the plan into a work program so that partners can be better prepared to engage in implementing the plan. You are encouraged to review Sections 6 and 7 of this document for more details on coordination and implementation approaches while you develop your landscape stewardship plan.

Components of a Landscape Stewardship Plan

Resource management plans typically contain similar kinds of information but they are often placed into a rambling package of independent components or chapters. While there is no one right way to compile a planning document, it helps those who use plans when the content is organized into a rough sequential format comparable to the planning process described earlier.

The following outline provides a suggested three-part structure to help organize a landscape stewardship plan:

Part 1 – The Analysis: Inventory and Assessment

Develop a shared understanding of the challenges as well as opportunities to overcome them.

- Inventory and Assessment of Resources – An analysis of the environmental, economic, and social resources in the community of place or interest.
- Challenges and Opportunities – A discussion about the major issues and challenges facing forests in the landscape and possible options to address these issues.
- Key Findings – A summary of the critical issues and assets that must be addressed in the vision.

Part 2 – The Vision: Desired Future Conditions, Goals, and Objectives

Establish the framework, a road map, or blueprint of what you want to happen to forests in your community of place or community of interest, and how to make that vision happen.

- Vision – A broad-reaching statement that describes or frames the long-term outcome or desired future conditions for forests and communities. Timeframe: 50 to 100 years or longer.
- Goals – Statements that outline directions that should be pursued to support the attainment of the vision. Specific goals should be developed for ecological, economic, and social directions as framed in the vision statements. Timeframe: 10 to 20 years.
- Objectives – Statements that provide further direction on the specific programs or projects that are needed to implement each goal. Goals may have one or more objectives. Timeframe: 1 to 5 years.

Part 3 – Application and Evaluation: Coordination, Implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation

In this part of the plan, include a description of how partners will coordinate with each other to better prepare for implementing the landscape stewardship plan. Provide an initial outline of how to maintain the plan over time through monitoring and evaluation.

- Coordination Strategies – A brief outline of the roles and responsibilities that stakeholders will take on to support the implementation of the plan (Section 6).
- Implementation Action Plan – The goals and objectives integrated into the work program or implementation schedule. The schedule is developed in a table format that links specific objectives with priorities, lead party, timeframes, and costs Section 7).
- Monitoring and Evaluation – The methods and metrics used to measure accomplishments and outcomes. Also include methods and procedures for reporting (Section 9).

Appendices

Add appendices to the plan to provide supporting or background information. Appendix items could include a list of the people and organizations that developed the plan; terms, acronyms, and definitions; financial and technical resources; and templates for streamlined individual landowner stewardship plans.

Section 5: The Elements of Planning Checklist and Notes

- £ Achieve consensus on the vision, goals, and objectives relating to the conservation of forest land in and around the community, as well as an understanding of the relationship of forest stewardship to the social, economic, and environmental issues facing the community.
- £ Identify actions that will be taken to meet the stakeholders' objectives and achieve their goals. These strategies must be based on the convergent interests of forest landowners, natural resource managers, and the greater community.
- £ Develop an outline of how to coordinate the public and private resources needed for successful plan implementation.
- £ Establish a framework for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project in both the short and long term.

Ask yourself:

What stumbling blocks to implementation do you foresee in your community?

What can you do to set your community up for success?

Section 6: The Elements of Coordination

A good landscape stewardship plan prepared with broad participation will be an excellent foundation for a landscape project but will not in itself establish the level of coordination needed to ensure seamless service delivery, especially if the plan covers multiple jurisdictions and operational territories.

Reconvening a few key partners from the planning process and asking them to help shape coordination and implementation efforts is a good initial step. You may have begun coordination during the planning process. The steps are closely intertwined.

Develop approaches that encourage partners both at a statewide program level and within project coordination teams across the State to actively nurture and support growth in the number of partners involved. The commitment to sharing resources on an ongoing basis is the core to developing and expanding partnership capacity. Landscape stewardship depends on increasing partnership capacity across all levels of government as well as within private and nonprofit sectors.

Consider

A good way to kick off coordination is to celebrate the success of completing a landscape-scale plan. Invite the entire community and ask partners to tell the story about what they want to accomplish. Look for new partners to join in.

Implementing a landscape-scale stewardship project involves far more collaboration and coordinated efforts by service providers in partnership with local conservation staff and community leaders than does stewardship support for individual landowners. Supporting active involvement by everyone is critical. Sharing resources among different levels of government (from Federal and State levels with local units) takes increased communication and effort, but will improve service delivery. Citizens generally do not see or care about the divisions in their governments; they expect the public sector to provide service.

Tip

Assess Past Coordination Efforts. Just as you should look at other community plans before writing a new one, so too should you look to other teams before forming a new one. A useful exercise in the coordination phase for cooperative forest managers and State foresters is simply to go back to a variety of planning documents that natural resource agencies have developed over the past 10 years and assess how clearly the partner roles and responsibilities are laid out in the planning document. Follow this exercise with an informal inventory of the coordination efforts made during implementation. This kind of assessment can yield many lessons on collaboration and tools for coordination.

There are coordination dilemmas that go well beyond the sphere of planning. Recognize and address these before implementation begins. Explore a variety of tools to increase and better organize working relationships during the project's implementation. Some coordination tools and products include:

- Partnership building exercises
- Memorandums of understanding and charters
- Action plans updated annually with more detail than that in the landscape plan
- A list of potential funding sources and ways to pursue them

Operational or project guidance documents can help you explore coordination tools. If you haven't already, you and the implementation team should discuss:

- What types of landowners are in a given landscape? What are their driving interests and why?
- How easy is it for landowners to find the appropriate service provider to assist them with what they want?
- How will new landowners get connected with a new landscape-scale approach?
- How can you provide better service delivery and increase the influence of Federal, State, and local cooperative forestry programs?
- How do you make the customer come first and at the same time serve the community's needs?
- Who are all the service providers to landowners (public, private, non-profit) in Cooperative (or Private) Forest Management programs?
- On what geographic and topic areas do these service providers focus?
- What are the unique roles and responsibilities of each service provider or entity?
- What agreements and commitments do stewardship partners need to guide collaborative efforts in implementation?
- What skills and resources are needed by State foresters, Cooperative Forest Managers, field foresters, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, consultants, and industry to be actively involved in landscape-scale approaches?
- What knowledge do local officials, community leaders, and nongovernmental organizations need to have to be actively involved in landscape-scale approaches?
- What are the laws and zoning regulations, among others constraints, found in the landscape? Are they causing any problems for sustainability of the resource?
- Are there any groups of people with particular power or influence in the landscape that we should talk to in order to gain buy-in?
- What are the entities in the landscape that are responsible for land use planning and how can we utilize their expertise and information to sustain the resource?

Service Provider Training

While landscape approaches to forest stewardship provide significant benefits, successful implementation will likely require that State agency staff and field foresters learn new skills in some or all of the following areas: media training, land use planning, strategic communication, social/conservation marketing, working with local decisionmakers, and meeting facilitation. Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry is in the process of adapting the *Changing Roles* training used in the South to fit conditions across our region. This training will address some of these topics. Other training courses may be developed or adapted from other fields to help foresters acquire the skills necessary to be successful.

Consider

Each State should consider developing its own project or operational guide for landscape stewardship. Cooperative Forest Managers could begin collecting ideas for developing this type of guide during the planning process. It is very likely that each State has already developed numerous subregional projects that should be tapped into for ideas to help build coordination tools for a landscape-scale stewardship effort.

Individual States will need to determine who on their staff will receive what training and to what extent. For example, field foresters will need to have a working knowledge of conservation marketing without necessarily becoming experts in the field. Perhaps there is someone elsewhere in the organization who already has sufficient knowledge to become a trainer, or who can be trained to an adequate level to help other staff.

Many training resources already exist, but are not specific to forestry. The watershed planning and management discipline has developed a large number of publications and other resources that can be extremely useful in our new approach to forest stewardship. Though they address specific watershed-related topics, the processes used are essentially the same as those we want to use. Citations for several publications that are readily available on the Web are listed later in this document.

Funding Development

How will landscape-scale forest stewardship be funded? Experience has shown that landscape approaches to natural resource conservation tend to attract various types of funding. Partners that get involved in a landscape-scale project area do so because it meets some of their own resource or public relations goals. Because the project also meets their own needs, they can support efforts in the landscape project area.

An often untapped reservoir of funding may come from local businesses that will benefit from the results of the resource management activities taking place. For example, a local canoe outfitter may see benefit in financially aiding efforts that maintain or improve water quality in a local river. There are also opportunities for financial support opening up as more and more businesses want to project an environmentally responsible image.

Landscape-scale, multipartner, coordinated efforts often carry increased weight with foundations, trusts, and government agencies when it comes to applying for grants. The Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Innovation Grants and Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative projects both look favorably on multipartner project applications. There is a considerable amount of money available through grants and other programs that landscape stewardship efforts can tap into.

Funding development is discussed in much greater detail in the Technical and Financial Assistance Section (Section 8).

Section 6: The Elements of Coordination Checklist and Notes

- £ Build a team that assumes responsibility for gathering implementation resources, builds partnership capacity to carry out the plan, and oversees the coordinated execution of the project plan.
- £ Integrate and align the landscape stewardship project with local, State, and Federal programs and priorities.
- £ Initiate training programs for service and consulting foresters as well as others in the community who will be key players in project implementation.
- £ Obtain financial and in-kind commitments of resources needed to begin project implementation.
- £ Develop a conservation marketing campaign that includes processes, coordination mechanisms, and operational procedures that you will use to more robustly engage communities and landowners about implementing forest stewardship in the landscape project area.

Ask yourself:

Are there existing examples or case studies of landscape stewardship projects that could serve as a model for your project?

Are there individuals with landscape stewardship experience who could help train or mentor your team?

Section 7: Implementing a Landscape Project

Implementation of landscape stewardship projects will be as successful as the imagination, creativity, and commitment that partners and stakeholders bring to the overall landscape stewardship process.

Using a landscape-scale, all-lands approach to forest stewardship is different from traditional approaches of the past because it is much broader in scope. Landscape stewardship seeks to connect and implement multiple efforts at both the community and landowner levels, working toward shared objectives that have been fleshed out in an open and collaborative planning process. In fact, it will help the stewardship project team tasked with preparing that plan (see Section 5) to review this section as they prepare their management recommendations and outlines for implementation.

This section provides guidance on implementing natural resource conservation activities within a project area as guided by the landscape stewardship plan.

Implementation Strategies and Tools

There is no one strategy that will solve the challenges of significantly increasing forest stewardship across the region and keeping forests as forests. One of the benefits of using a landscape approach to forest stewardship is that it encourages partners and stakeholders to consider multiple strategies at varying scales, bring those strategies together in a cohesive plan, and then take complementary actions that are relevant to the local community's culture and traditions.

To help States create and tailor their own landscape stewardship program, we briefly describe a framework of five general implementation strategies to initiate further discussions. These strategies can be used in nearly any resource management endeavor, including forest stewardship.

Outreach & Education

Landowners, local officials, and the general public benefit from increased knowledge and awareness about the benefits that forests provide as well as ways they can support sustainable forestry practices. Up to this point a certain amount of outreach and education of this nature has been accomplished with interested and participating stakeholders during the planning and coordination phases of a project. As the project moves to the implementation phase, outreach and education activities will continue in more, and perhaps different, forms.

Incentive Programs

Incentive programs provide technical and financial assistance that is designed to help achieve goals and policies established by Federal, State, and local agencies. Incentive programs have long been the foundation for promoting forest stewardship among landowners. Designing and implementing effective incentive programs is a complex endeavor. Augmenting existing local and State agency programs that support and complement increased forest stewardship is an excellent strategy.

Public Investments

Local, State, and Federal investments are made in all communities on a regular basis. Public investments are obviously made to construct public facilities and support public lands, but they can generate great benefits to private property as well. Roads, bridges, and waterways support public good but also encourage and support private investment. These investments can directly and indirectly affect forest resources. Stakeholders concerned about private forest management in a given landscape should consider strategies that help shape relevant decisionmaking processes related to public investments. This is especially critical in lean budget times.

Landscape stewardship plans can provide a useful context and critical relevant information about priority forest resources in a given area and help support the public investment decisionmaking process. These plans can and should help encourage investments in forestry by private interests as well. When preparing an implementation program for your landscape stewardship plan, include strategies that guide future public and private investments in a project area.

Policy Integration

Forest resources in a given landscape can be directly impacted by management plans and policies that govern land use, economic development, transportation, utilities, water resources, and other natural resources. To better influence policy, landscape stewardship teams must be aware of existing policies and how they impact landscape stewardship planning efforts. They must also be engaged early in policy discussions. Stewardship teams must think of creative ways to influence policy on their behalf. Engagement will enable landscape stewardship teams to influence policy decisions related to land use and natural resource conservation.

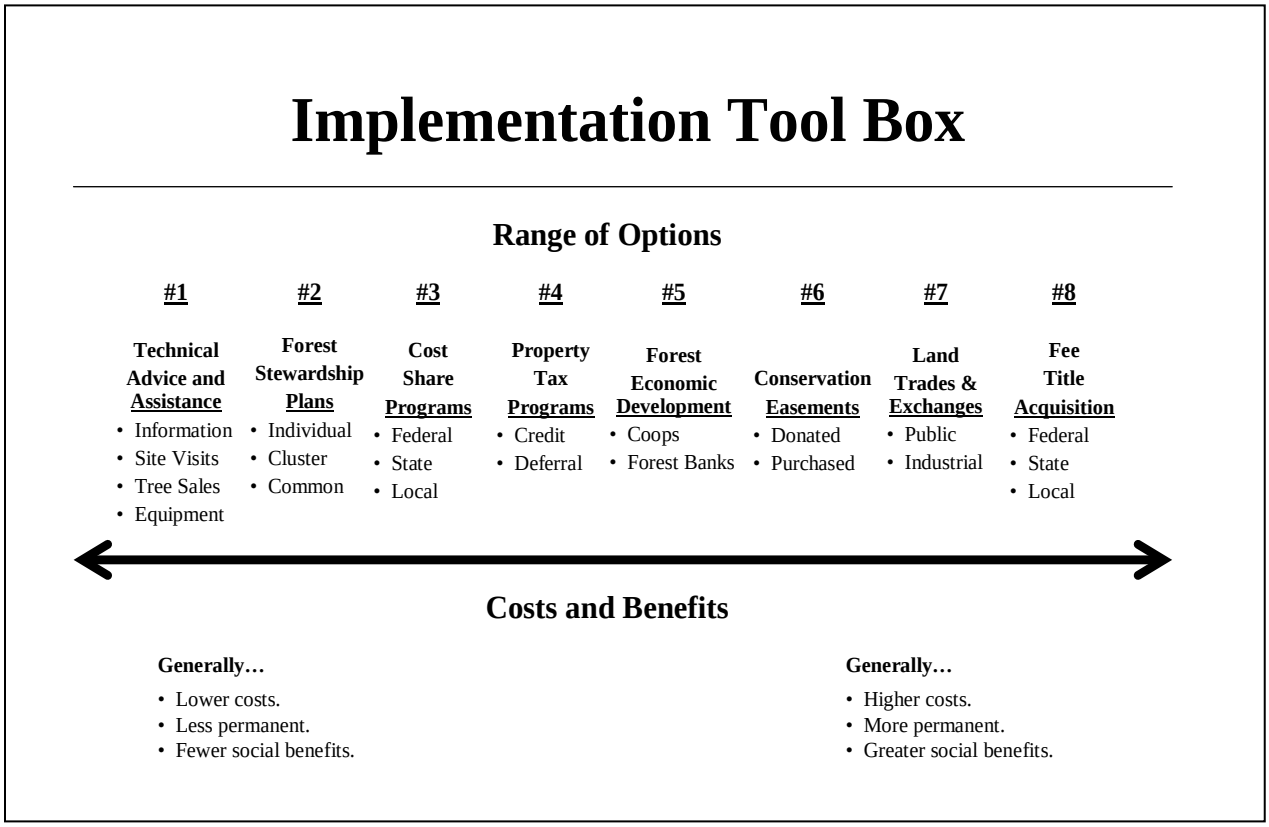
Regulation

Regulation is probably the least preferred of the implementation strategies. While most people can explain the need for regulation, getting agreement on specific details for a given ordinance or regulation becomes more difficult. However, while regulation as a strategy to implement a landscape stewardship project is not generally used, the overall goal of keeping forests as forests may require local stewardship teams to become knowledgeable about land use planning and zoning. Although this arena is largely regulatory, there are many new and innovative approaches to land use planning that are not regulatory. These include Low Impact Development (LID), density and cluster development bonuses, transfer of development rights, conservation easements, and deed restrictions.

Landscape stewardship *can* provide reliable and relevant information for local officials to help define the context and value of forest resources in a community. Landscape stewardship planning teams should consider developing goals that support local community development strategies related to conserving natural resources.

The Implementation Toolbox

When you outline implementation strategies in resource management plans, consider the entire range of tools that resource managers can use. The implementation tool box is often bigger than many people realize. The following diagram illustrates many of the major implementation tools that can be incorporated into landscape stewardship plans. These may fall under one or more of the strategies described above.



* Source: Dan Steward, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

As the diagram suggests, services provided to landowners on the left end of the range of options tend to be less costly, but are also less permanent in nature and less explicitly connected with societal benefits. In contrast, techniques listed further to the right side of the spectrum, while more costly, generally tend to have a greater degree of permanence and produce more easily recognized benefits to society.

Tip

When faced with a variety of issues and challenges, both landowners and communities need to be exposed to a range of options and the science that supports these options to make the best decisions related to managing their forest lands. Options can help people become more creative in trying to address complex challenges. Present the spectrum of implementation tools and available options to encourage landowners and community leaders to develop a flexible and effective stewardship plan based on the all-lands approach.

Implementing Landscape Stewardship in Communities

One of the benefits that a landscape stewardship approach can bring to the challenge of keeping forests as forests is more opportunities to work at the community level—opportunities for integrating not only community values and perspectives but untapped resources and local insights as well. Encourage landscape planning committees to craft stewardship strategies at the community level that promote and support community goals as well as those of the individual landowners in a project area.

Outreach & Education

Design outreach and education efforts so that they provide useful information to people, increase their skills, and enhance their knowledge. A tremendous amount of effort has been applied to forest stewardship outreach and education in each State over the past 20 or more years that has benefitted individual landowners, but not perhaps the broader community. Outreach and educational efforts conducted at the landscape scale will be connected to other resource management initiatives and implemented in concert with them.

When strategies for outreach and education are incorporated into a conservation marketing campaign as well as a landscape stewardship plan, they will far more effectively engage both landowners and communities to their mutual benefit. Consider leveraging the resources and skills of a greater number of collaborating partners, and then integrating outreach and education events into the landscape stewardship project.

A conservation marketing campaign developed through a landscape stewardship process has the potential to greatly increase your ability to craft an integrated outreach and education program for landowners and community representatives in a project area. Together, a landscape planning committee and coordination team will have a far greater pool of knowledge about landowners and local officials and their interests than any one staff or agency alone. By sharing their insights, landscape teams can create better outreach and education programs.

Coordinating this effort with State extension staff and woodland owner organizations means that landowners and communities can be served in more robust ways. With budget woes in most, if not all, States and the continued expectation of getting more done with less, local stewardship teams will be a great asset to extension staff in supporting education efforts. Below are some topics that may be of interest. Keep a running list of topics and potential speakers for your project area that includes:

- Wildlife management
- Firewise and fire safety
- Timber harvesting and sales
- Estate planning and intergenerational transfer
- Forest land ownership by women
- Property tax planning
- Carbon sequestration, climate change, and ecosystem services
- Ecosystem management
- Shoreland and riparian forests
- Community land use planning

Consider

Every outreach and education event can provide you with valuable insights into the interests and concerns of landowners and community leaders. Collecting and recording that information can help you improve not only future education events but service delivery to specific landowners. For example, distributing a short postcard survey at all events that asks a participant for specific topics of interest and their contact information is a quick way to collect this data. Coordination teams can then work together with that data to design better ways to serve the needs of individual landowners. Use a computer database to track information by landowner. Use this information to better serve their specific needs.

Incentive Programs

What agencies and organizations have an interest in sustainable landscapes or in serving private forest landowners in your State? What services and programs do they offer?

Having this kind of information can help you and landscape teams more quickly identify existing programs and funding resources that can expand forest stewardship opportunities for both communities and landowners in a project area. This information can greatly enhance and support grant writing and fundraising.

Have an inventory of program and staff members that is available to all landscape teams and maintained by all partners. Encourage everyone to help reform and revise existing programs. We suggest that you and State foresters contact stewardship teams for insights on making program adjustments.

This information is also invaluable when designing new service programs for private forest landowners. It is relatively easy to create a new program in response to a single issue or tactical matter. It is more difficult to design and implement a program that integrates multiple partners and resources. There is a time and place for both.

It is essential that you interact with community leaders and local officials about existing as well as new incentive programs that support forest stewardship for all landscape projects. Encourage landscape teams to seek out existing community programs and resources that can support forest stewardship. This is a great way to further engage community leaders. Citizens want their local governments to serve them well and they take ownership in it. Townships, municipalities, school districts, watershed districts, and soil and water conservation districts—all provide direct and immediate services to landowners. Their direct service delivery responsibilities and authorities must be respected and supported by higher levels of government for there to be trust and increased levels of engagement. State and Federal incentive programs that are disconnected with and operating in isolation from these units are targets for future elimination in lean economic times.

Case Study

In 1977, Minnesota was stricken by drought conditions that nearly rivaled the infamous drought of the 1930s. That prompted the Legislature to seek ways to better manage the State's water supplies, which led to the enactment of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Act. The act encourages counties outside of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area to develop and implement comprehensive local water management plans. Although the plans are voluntary, various State and Federal grants require recipients to have adopted a local water management plan that is updated every 5 to 10 years.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has oversight responsibilities to ensure that local water plans are prepared and coordinated with existing local and State efforts and that plans are implemented effectively. All parts of Minnesota have state-approved and locally adopted plans in place, and most counties have developed their fourth generation water plans. These local plans focus on priority concerns, defined goals and objectives, and measurable outcomes. The BWSR provides grants to help counties carry out priority projects and programs in their plans. The BWSR provides financial assistance through the Natural Resources Block Grant. Additional funding is available to counties, watershed districts, and watershed management organizations in the form of challenge grants provided through the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. As a general-purpose unit of government, counties, with their planning and land-use authorities, are uniquely positioned to link many land-use decisions with local goals for surface and groundwater protection and management.

Recognizing the important role that forests play in protecting water quality, the BWSR is supporting the development of lake protection assessments and strategies by its local partners. A pilot project for three lake-rich counties in north-central Minnesota has been completed, and funding has been secured for a second round. The “lakeshed” assessments will help identify areas where reforestation and forest restoration efforts should be implemented. Projects on public and private lands will then be developed based on the State Forest Action Plan.

Public Investments

Public lands, roads and bridges, transmission lines and utilities, and other public facilities are important physical design features of any landscape. Their location and operation across the landscape can significantly impact private forest lands.

The landscape stewardship approach encourages active linkages among local governments within project areas so they can jointly plan for these public features in light of their effect on private forest lands. Landscape stewardship teams can affect public investment decisions if they better understand local government processes.

Capital Improvement Program

Capital improvement programming is a financial planning process that local governments use to prioritize their investments in public infrastructure systems. This includes roads and bridges, parks and trails, water and sewer facilities, land acquisition, and public buildings. Make community forestry projects a part of a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as well as a part of any of the typical public infrastructure projects listed above.

Typically, CIPs list potential projects and estimated costs over a 5-year period; they are updated every 1 or 2 years. Incorporate recommended projects that were developed in a local government's long-range plans into its CIP. Thus, the CIP process represents a primary means of implementing the community's long-range plans.

Official Mapping

State statutes generally grant local governments the authority to adopt official maps after the adoption of transportation and public facilities plans. An official map shows where land is needed in a community for future streets or road widening, parks, civic buildings, and other public facilities. The primary purposes of an official map include 1) communicating with property owners, developers, and citizens about where these lands are to be located; and 2) preventing or forestalling the construction of buildings or other private improvements on the designated lands. It is designed to save the public expense of paying for buildings and improvements in such designated corridors or sites. To adopt an official map, a local government must work through processes established in State laws. This often includes a review of the map by a planning commission and a public hearing held by the local board or council. We encourage you and forest landowners to be a part of the official mapping process.

Case Study

Access to parcels within the mixed land ownership patterns in northern St. Louis County, Minnesota, has a long and sometimes complicated history. With the recent ownership transition of industrial forest lands to Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), questions about road access arose. Recognizing this change, resource managers worked together to develop a cooperative road easement project for a 50,000-acre area. Public agencies have worked cooperatively with private landowners to establish a system of permanent road easements that guarantees access to both public lands for public use as well as private tracts. Public agencies will work cooperatively with private landowners to maintain and rebuild these forest management roads for all-weather use to support access for future timber sales and recreational uses.

Policy Integration

What if a landowner has invested years of effort and money on his or her private woodland only to discover the county has approved a new highway corridor that will require the condemnation of a swath across this person's woodland? Or worse, what if the school district decided to acquire the entire wooded tract to locate its new school?

While these kinds of community growth issues cannot be avoided, many issues can be resolved or at least have their impacts minimized through landscape stewardship and increased coordination with local units of government. Knowing about local community development policy processes and integrating landscape stewardship goals into community planning are essential to keeping forests as forests.

Community Planning

States have enacted varying levels of authority for their local governments to plan and guide community growth and development. It is essential that program managers and foresters have at least a basic understanding of these processes if they want to have any chance of shaping the decisions that come from community development.

The primary way that service foresters and private forest landowners can help shape future land use in communities is to get involved in the local planning processes. Most local governments are looking for informed and caring citizens to become more active in community planning. And sometimes, private landowners are the ones who prompt local officials to get a local planning process moving forward.

Another approach is to get your landscape stewardship plan approved as an amendment to your local community's land use plan. Landscape committee members may start this connection by asking to give a presentation about the stewardship plan to the planning commission. Look for other simple ways to get connected—anything to build a bridge and get more people aware of the values that private forests provide to a community.

Orderly Annexation Agreements and Community Growth Area Plans

Orderly annexation agreements are one form of cooperative effort between two or more local units of government. The orderly annexation process is just that: an agreed upon process whereby the affected units of government come together to develop a logical solution to annexation issues. Community growth area plans represent an initial effort to help build the dialogue between cities, townships, and landowners in a community about the location and intensity of future development. Information about forest resources can result in better plans.

Case Study

Aitkin County, Minnesota, has over 500,000 acres of family forest lands, more than 350 lakes, and hundreds of miles of streams and rivers. The county's Comprehensive Local Water Management, administered by the Aitkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), established a series of goals for guiding conservation practices in riparian areas. They include 1) supporting shore management and protection, 2) promoting riparian buffer zones, and 3) continuing and expanding the appropriate use of conservation easements on high-priority sites. These practices complement the county's land use planning framework.

Riparian areas have been identified as priorities for special consideration through the county's forest stewardship program. In May 2007, the Aitkin SWCD became the first local conservation district in the Nation to offer a third-party certification program for private landowners. Certification is through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The SWCD is working with State, local, and private partners in a collaborative funded in part by the U.S. Forest Service's State and Private Forestry unit to protect and enhance riparian forest lands and support water quality protection through forest stewardship planning and FSC Certification. Integrating forest management with the local water resource policy is supporting increased private forest land management on high-priority areas in the county.

Regulation

What if a landowner has invested years of effort and resources in their woodland and discovers the adjoining parcel is going to be developed into a residential subdivision? Will the woodland landowner be subject to trespass issues, vandalism concerns, and increased liability?

Land use is a matter of local control. Private forests fall under the dominion of local government control as established by each State legislature and implemented by the local units of government. Unfortunately, far too many private woodland owners nationwide have suffered from poorly planned or unplanned urban, suburban, and rural development.

In these situations there is often a lack of communication between community officials, developers, and private landowners. There has not generally been the kind of dialogue suggested in the community planning process above; new development proposals catch most people by surprise. This results in public anger with the process and widespread frustration with governments at all levels. Yet, how much effort have most landowners put into proactively preventing problems? How many communities have actively sought out the interests of private woodland owners? How often do you find a developer that initiates dialogue with adjoining owners early in the design process? A landscape approach can bring these players together and regulation can help.

A difficult but critical role for landscape stewardship teams in this context is to help inform local officials as well as developers about the values that private forest lands bring to the community and to an adjoining development. If private woodland owners in a project area are facing pending development proposals, landscape teams can help affected landowners in their communication with local officials and developers. All major development proposals require a variety of approvals and permits whereby there are leverage points that communities can use to promote safe and orderly development. Developers have short- and long-term responsibilities to appropriately address a wide variety of concerns relating to their projects. Local governments need to oversee the process fairly and competently. State foresters and program managers can promote and support training for landscape teams on the review and approval processes involved with community development. Most States have an existing organization or entity that provides this type of training. While most managers may shy away from this idea, history illustrates over and over that not getting involved, not getting connected and communicating, letting the future unfold onto us—has simply not worked in the mission of keeping forests as forests.

Case Study

Located in central Minnesota, Todd County covers approximately 1,000 square miles and is located in all three of the State's ecological provinces – Laurentian Mixed Forest, Eastern Broadleaf Forest, and the Prairie Parkland. Because it is located in an ecological transition area, the county faces many challenges from both a land use and natural resource perspective. County leaders, landowners, and citizens need to contend with a broad range of management issues relating to all three environs. Land cover information was critical to the planning process.

The policy framework adopted by the Todd County Board of Commissioners included a series of goals and objectives to promote the sustainable management of forest resources. In addition, land use policies were developed that advocated the protection of forest lands through zoning and subdivisions regulations, incentive programs, and conservation easements.

Section 7: Implementing a Landscape Project Checklist and Notes

- £ Complete the conservation marketing campaign and hold community outreach and education events that build greater awareness of and support for the stewardship of forest land in the project area.
- £ Enlist the support of local decisionmakers who understand the impacts of local land use regulations and can enhance the viability of owning forest land in the community.
- £ Enlist the support of local decisionmakers for programs and policies that enhance the viability of owning forest land in the community.
- £ Reach out to and educate a critical mass of targeted private forest landowners using a conservation marketing approach.
- £ Build a sustainable peer group network to leverage the capacity of local service foresters in assisting other forest landowners in the community.
- £ Develop a streamlined landowner stewardship plan template for the project area.
- £ Implement (or at least begin implementing) the landscape stewardship plan objectives.

Ask yourself:

How can existing financial assistance programs be reformed and revised to support landscape forest stewardship?

Is there a comprehensive rezoning or community growth planning effort underway or planned for your landscape stewardship area, and are you positioned to be engaged in the process?

Section 8: Technical and Financial Assistance to Landowners

Financial Viability & Beyond:

Implementing Landscape Stewardship with Landowners

State forestry agencies have a long, successful history of working directly with private landowners. While many landowners are primarily motivated by their values and interests when making land management decisions, the financial implications of their decisions may also play an important role.

Financial viability refers to the ability of the landowner to continue managing according to his or her objectives over the long term, without being unnecessarily constrained by the economic costs or financial burdens of forest land ownership. For some individuals, this will entail producing an economic profit; for others, merely breaking even or limiting losses may adequately compensate for the rewards they associate with private forest land ownership and stewardship. An individual's financial goals and considerations with respect to owning his or her land may also change over time.

It is helpful for Landscape Stewardship Teams to be aware of landowner considerations and objectives concerning financial viability and be able to suggest options that may provide financial support or incentives, if relevant, as a means to further engage forest landowners in landscape-scale planning. The National Woodland Owner Survey has helped us gain a better understanding of landowners and their motivations for owning land.[2] This research has been combined with marketing concepts and developed into an extensive Web site: Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE).[3] This information can help Landscape Planning Teams understand whether and to what extent financial viability may be a relevant concern or appropriate "carrot" to encourage landowner participation in landscape-scale efforts. Of course, Landscape Planning Teams will also benefit from engaging directly with communities to assess the extent to which financial viability is relevant in their planning efforts.

This chapter describes some financial viability tools and considerations that may prove helpful in taking a landscape-scale stewardship approach with landowners.

1. Technical Advice and Assistance

Most States have a coordinated process for assisting landowners. A strong working relationship among conservation agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and State service foresters is essential for effectively communicating with landowners interested in forest stewardship. Such partnerships provide forest owners with a variety of technical assistance, including tree seedlings and equipment, regeneration checks, and technical expertise. This assistance is very helpful in addressing issues such as climate change and intergenerational wealth transfer.

Landscape Stewardship Teams that have gone through robust planning and coordination phases may be more capable of providing ongoing technical assistance to landowners. Collaboration can lead to more creative and cost-effective solutions.

[2] NWOS: http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos/
[3] TELE: http://www.engaginglandowners.org/

Tip

Missouri Common Forest Management Plan
Forestry interests in Missouri recognized the need for a single, common format for forest management plans for several reasons: Tree Farm plans became more rigorous when the forest certifying body Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) recognized the Tree Farm System, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) developed its forest management plan standard (106). A small committee composed of State forestry agency foresters and staff, NRCS foresters and staff, private consulting foresters, forest landowners, and university staff (many of whom also serve on the State Tree Farm committee) designed a forest management plan format that landowners would easily understand, yet would contain all the required elements of Forest Stewardship, NRCS Forest Management, and Tree Farm plans. From a technical standpoint this was not a very difficult task because all three plan formats require nearly the same information. It was more difficult to get committee members to agree on a single plan format because nearly all participants had their personal preferences on how to put together a forest management plan.

2. Financial Assistance and Incentive Programs

Similar to the transition from one-on-one stewardship plans to landscape stewardship plans, financial assistance programs can also evolve and mature. Group, cluster, or neighborhood projects can take shape to serve multiple landowners who have a common need or concern. This concept may need an "aggregator" in the form of a lead landowner, consulting forester, or other resource professional who initiates the effort. Depending upon local circumstances, forest cooperatives may provide an appropriate vehicle for accessing financial assistance (cost share) or incentive program dollars. For owners of small parcels of land, partnering with others can save money on consulting services, marking paint, herbicides, or logging costs. Being able to work together may result in more attractive timber sales and better protection of shared features such as wetlands and wildlife habitat. In addition, landowners who jointly manage blocks of forest land may have better leverage in getting assistance from State and community volunteer programs or funding for projects to control or monitor invasive species. They may be candidates for demonstration or research sites for innovative methods. The landscape approach provides a stronger platform to support these and other kinds of locally based collaborative actions, including:

- Timber sales
- Tree planting
- Timber stand improvement
- Firewood harvests
- Fuel reduction
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Road and trail planning
- Visual and water resource buffers
- Invasive species and weed control
- Assessment of carbon stocks for carbon credits or other ecosystem benefits

While many financial assistance or cost-share programs have traditionally been administered to individual landowners, *there may be flexibility to expand these programs to serve multiple landowners with a common need or concern within your community of interest*—this is the essence of a landscape-scale approach organized around an issue or resource of community interest. Organizing a group of concerned and interested landowners and working with a granting agency to administer a group, collective, or neighborhood grant is a promising option for implementing conservation on a landscape scale.

3. Individual Financial Assistance Programs Potentially Suitable to Landscape Scale Stewardship[4]

A table of potentially relevant financial assistance programs can be found in appendix E. While these programs may be familiar, working with local Natural Resources Conservation Service coordinators to deploy them on a landscape scale may represent a new opportunity.

4. Forest Cooperatives and Economic Development Programs

Traditionally, a cooperative is defined as a "business organization of member—patrons who work together for mutual benefit in marketing products, purchasing supplies, or obtaining services at cost." [5] More recently, the International Cooperative Alliance has given the term an even broader definition, stating that a cooperative is "an independent association of people who come together voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspire to develop a jointly owned and democratically controlled project."[6] Cooperative members serve the dual role of patron and owner and, as such, each individual shares responsibility for the success or failure of the cooperative. Cooperatives may be operated on a nonprofit or for profit basis, and a common characteristic of all cooperatives is that they return a portion of their profits to members based on investment and support.

Forestry cooperatives have existed in the United States and elsewhere for the last century or more. Early forestry cooperatives in the United States were primarily focused on timber sales and produced mixed results. Many of the early forestry cooperatives in the United States failed because of insufficient interest and support by members, inadequate capital, lack of sufficient volume of business, or inadequate management.[5] Today, private forest landowners have a variety of interests and motivations that are not always (or not primarily) related to forest management and timber sales. These include recreation, nonmarket amenities, solitude, and wildlife habitat. These landowner interests may help define the appropriate nature of a cooperative in a given landscape.

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[4] Description of cost-share programs is taken from the *My Healthy Woods Handbook for Family Woodland Owners*, a publication of the Aldo Leopold Foundation and the American Forest Foundation, 2010. Available at https://www.aldoleopold.org/programs/myhealthywoods.shtml.

[5] Dempsey, Gilbert P.; Markeson, Clyde B. 1969. Guidelines for establishing forestry cooperatives. Res. Pap. NE–133. Upper Darby, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station.

[6] Zeuli, K. 2006. What is a cooperative? In: Proceedings of a conference on forestry cooperatives: what today's resource professionals need to know. Jakes, P.J., comp. Gen. Tech. Rep. NC–GTR–266. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station: 13-20.

Recent research has begun to illuminate the advantages of cooperatives and the perceived benefits to members and their communities. These are listed below.

Benefits of Cooperatives[7]
For landowner cooperative members:
Improved access to new knowledge and information
Increased access to labor, services, and equipment
Increased income
More satisfaction in forest land ownership and management
For the Cooperative:
Enhanced ability to deliver services to members
Improved market participation
Reduced operating costs
For Communities:
Improved community stability/cohesiveness
Improved environmental health

In addition, research has begun to identify the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats (challenges) associated with forming and running a successful cooperative in the United States. The findings from this "**SWOT**" analysis can contribute to possible future success. For example, when we understand the generic strengths of cooperative structures, we can use those strengths to capitalize on opportunities and counteract threats. By understanding weaknesses, we can try to minimize them and avoid any associated threats. The result of a recent comprehensive SWOT analysis by Blinn and others (2007)[8] is shown on the following page.

To better understand some of these potential strengths and weaknesses, it is helpful to examine the successes and shortcomings of various cooperatives. Appendix J contains a series of four case studies compiled by Pamela Jakes originally presented in *Forestry Cooperatives: What today's resource professionals need to know*.[8]

In addition to traditional cooperatives, other models of landowner aggregation may provide some of the same opportunities and benefits as cooperatives without relying as heavily on member/patron grassroots organization. Tree Farm, Coverts for Wildlife, and other similar groups that share a social as well as management and education focus have successfully engaged landowners on issues such as third-party certification, carbon inventory/management, and wildlife habitat. In Vermont, an aggregate of managing landowners guided by a forestry consulting firm is striving to "brand" high-quality hardwood for a manufacturer while helping to ensure future supply of the needed raw material locally. There may also be other opportunities to reach landowners and expand participation in cooperatives or other landowner structures using economic incentives or products. These might range from services for management and/or investment, insurance products, or discounts on material goods.

[7] Blinn, Charles R.; Jakes, Pamela J.; Sakai, Misato. 2007. Forest landowner cooperatives in the United States: a local focus for engaging landowners. Journal of Forestry. 105(5): 245-251.

[8] Jakes, Pamela, ed. Forestry cooperatives: what today's resource professionals need to know: Proceedings of a satellite conference. 2003 November 18. Gen. Tech. Rep. NC–266. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station.

SWOT Analysis of Forestry Cooperatives

Internal Factors	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
· Bring together like-minded people to work together toward achieving common goals · Create opportunities for economies of scale · Provide services that are important to the membership · Focus on needs of members · Provide an alternative approach for reaching absentee landowners and those who are not attracted to other landowner assistance programs · Facilitate forest certification for members	· Members and volunteers burn out · Volunteers and/or members who can remain involved and/or committed are limited · Business and marketing strategies receive insufficient attention · Members/volunteers lack skill set necessary to fill leadership positions · High initial start-up and operational costs with inadequate funding sources
External Factors	
Opportunities	**Threats**
· Large number of underserved landowners · Large number of uninvolved landowners · Enhanced marketing opportunities · Landowners' multiple diverse ownership objectives · Increased interest in cooperatives · Increased demand for material from private land	· Challenges in a cooperative structure · Lack of understanding of what cooperatives are · Landowners' preference for independence · Lack of resources and personnel at community level

Other innovative economic development programs may be available and appropriate for private forest landowners in your region. Consulting foresters, local forestry organizations, and regional conservation organization are great sources of information about potential new opportunities. One such program, ShadeFund, is described below.

· ShadeFund
The Conservation Fund and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities have teamed up to create ShadeFund, an innovative project that "provides small loans to promising green entrepreneurs across America." Individuals and small organizations that work with sustainable forestry and forest products, small farms, ecotourism, small-scale renewable energy production, and natural food and medicines can apply for loans, which may range from $5,000-$50,000. This funding should be used to create green jobs and businesses that use and/or promote sustainable forestry and forest products. Individuals can contribute to loan funding available (tax deductible), while entrepreneurs or nongovernmental organizations can apply for loans to catalyze new business ideas. Other nonprofit organizations can become "field partners" to help promote ShadeFund in regional communities; Dovetail Partners, Inc., of Minnesota, recently became a field partner. States may also consider becoming partners to promote this idea. More information is available at http://shadefund-100928.businesscatalyst.com/beta/index.html.

5. Property Tax Programs

It may be possible to coordinate or create State and local property tax programs to confer an advantage to those who participate in landscape-scale stewardship efforts. Currently, several State programs provide incentives for keeping forests as forests and/or sustainable forest management efforts. Incorporating landscape-scale stewardship and planning in State property tax programs may help further smart growth and wise land use planning efforts. Use landscape projects from your State or other regions as case studies to inform your legislators about the benefits of crafting stewardship tax laws and programs for use on a landscape scale. Two well-known State programs that have had a substantial impact on keeping forests as forests through property tax law are described below. Use these as a starting point to guide efforts to create property tax programs that provide incentives for forest stewardship on a landscape scale.

Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Program

The Wisconsin Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program is a state-run program that was enacted in 1985. The goal of the program is to sustain Wisconsin's forest products industry by ensuring that forest land ownership remains affordable. Landowners who enroll in the program pay reduced taxes on their forest land (75-95 percent less than typical property taxes), as long as that land is managed for the sustainable production of timber resources. The MFL program recognizes and encourages management for other compatible uses (for example, wildlife habitat, recreation, soil and water protection). Acres enrolled in the program must be at least 80 percent forested, and it is possible for a landowner to enter only a portion of his or her land into the program (thus a landowner would pay differential property taxes on his or her house, agricultural land, and forest land, among others). Once a plot of forest land is entered into the program, it must be sustainably managed for timber production and must not be converted to nonforest use. If program requirements are violated, the landowner is responsible for repaying the full (lifetime) value of the reduced tax benefit. Much of the land enrolled in the MFL program is covered under an American Tree Farm System and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) group certificate, meaning that the timber is third-party independently certified as sustainable. While the MFL Program bestows a direct tax benefit, the State's timber industry and private forest landowners have received substantial aggregate benefits by creating a large supply of FSC-certified timber that has helped secure purchases by Time-Warner and other large corporate purchasers. More information about the MFL Program is available at http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/feeds/faqsFull.asp?s1=ForestTax&s2=MFL&inc=ftax.

Vermont Use Value Appraisal Program[9]

The Vermont Use Value Appraisal (UVA) Program, also called "Current Use" or "Land Use", enables landowners who practice agriculture or long-term forest management to have their enrolled land appraised for property taxes based on its value for forestry rather than its fair market value. When land is enrolled, the State attaches a permanent lien to the deed. Productive forest land appraised under this program receives this assessment as long as it is actively managed, unless the landowner decides to withdraw the land from the program, the legislature ends the program, or the parcel is discontinued by the Vermont Tax Department. If enrolled forest land is developed or harvested improperly, a land use change tax is levied on the developed portion, and all or a portion will be discontinued from the Current Use appraisal program.

[9] Description taken from the Vermont Division of Forestry Web site http://www.vtfpr.org/resource/for_forres_useapp.cfm

To be enrolled, forest land must have an approved forest management plan (Use Value Plan) updated at 10-year intervals. This document should clearly express the landowner's long-term forest management goals, describe forest stand conditions and silvicultural objectives, and include both a detailed map and schedule for silvicultural treatments. Upon expiration of a 10-year plan, the owner must file a new plan for the succeeding 10 years to remain in the program.

Since the plan must ensure that the land is being managed according to accepted forest standards, many landowners contract with private consulting foresters to develop, write, and implement the plan. County foresters who are employed by the State do not write Use Value Plans. Their role is to advise landowners and consulting foresters, review and approve management plans and Forest Management Activity Reports, and conduct on-site monitoring.

Landowners have a continuing responsibility to manage the enrolled parcel in a manner prescribed by their forest management plan. For continued eligibility, a Forest Management Activity Report must be filed with the county forester by February 1 detailing any forestry activities from the preceding year. If none occurred, no report is due.

All forest land parcels are periodically inspected by county foresters to ensure compliance with the management plan and to monitor scheduled forestry activities. Eligible parcels must be 25 acres in size, exclusive of a home or camp. Exemptions to the timber harvesting requirement are made for "Conservation UVA" enrollees (certified nonprofit organizations whose primary mission is land conservation) and for portions of forest land that are mapped as unproductive, having sensitive habitats or cultural sites, or as open areas to support biodiversity or habitat values. More information about the UVA Program is available at http://www.vtfpr.org/resource/for_forres_useapp.cfm.

6. Conservation Easements

The *Good Forestry in the Granite State*[10] report describes a conservation easement as "a flexible, effective tool to permanently protect land from subdivision, development, and mineral extraction." Easements may be an effective tool for landscape-scale conservation. Easements are designed to reflect and maintain a property's conservation values and to incorporate landowner and easement-holder objectives. The landowner retains ownership, the land remains on the tax rolls, and the easement restrictions pass with the land to future owners. A conservation easement may allow a landowner to:

- Continue good stewardship of the land. Most New Hampshire easements encourage good forest and farm management, and allow the harvesting of wood and agricultural products. An easement may require a forest management plan and harvest supervision by a forester.
- Ensure that the land remains undeveloped in perpetuity, or allows limited development while restricting subdivision, structures, and commercial and industrial uses on most of the property.

- Provide income or estate tax benefits. Development rights given up through an easement can be valued by a qualified appraiser. If the easement meets IRS requirements, the easement value may

[10]Bennett, Karen P., ed. 2010. Good forestry in the Granite State: recommended voluntary forest management practices for New Hampshire. 2d ed. University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, Durham, NH. 224 p. Available at www.goodforestry.org.

be considered a charitable donation for income tax purposes. A conservation easement generally lowers the value of the land and may reduce the value of an estate, thereby reducing potential Federal estate taxes.

- Receive direct financial benefits by selling a conservation easement, though this option is available in limited cases.

Easements may be a powerful tool for landscape-scale conservation. While the legal language contained within easements has become increasingly complex in the past several decades, it may be possible to aggregate a group of landowners interested in a specific landscape purpose—protecting a stretch of river or creating a wildife corridor, for example—and create one or more similar easements to cover the entirety of the aggregated landscape. Landscape stewardship projects can help identify unique forest resources that merit protection through a conservation easement program and help to educate, engage, and inspire buy in from critical stakeholders and landowners.

7. The Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program, a Federal program administered by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with States, offers a unique opportunity to preserve privately owned working forest landscapes through the use of both conservation easements and fee aquisitions. These landscapes may represent an aggregation of several ownerships and, while the forest(s) must have a Stewardship Plan (that outlines management and monitoring requirements) in place to be eligible, landowners may receive a substantial financial benefit (tax breaks in exchange for a donated conservation easement) from participation. The Forest Legacy Program can be used to help aggregate interested landowners already predisposed to conservation in many parts of the region served by Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry in communities that are facing substantial forest development threats. The Forest Legacy Program may be an extremely promising option if the landscape in question has been identified as a priority within the State Forest Action Plan.[11]

8. Land Trades and Exchanges

Land ownership patterns in all States include a mix of private and public forest lands. Most often, the ecological traits of a community's forest resources (soils, slope, aspect, and land type association, among others) have very little to do with the existing ownership patterns. The resulting maze of land ownerships, along with varying approaches and degrees of forest management, results in a patchwork of forest conditions. If issues related to fire suppression, forest health, and invasive species are to be dealt with successfully, they may require collaboration and cooperation among landowners. Even then, land exchanges and strategic trades to consolidate large tracts of land may offer the best prospects for forest management success.

Landscape teams should thoughtfully assess the land ownership/forest management dynamics at several levels—across the landscape project area, sublandscape areas, and on individual tracts. Closely study the incremental nature of evolving land ownership patterns, coupled with the corresponding forest stewardship efforts, to determine how much of a challenge there is in restoring or sustaining the forests in the project area over time. In particular, view opportunities to adjust boundaries as a foundational implementation effort to sustain the physical and ecological integrity of larger blocks of forest land.

[11] More information on State Forest Action Plans can be found at http://www.stateforesters.org/issues_and_policy/forests_in_the_farm_bill.

The ability to process the sale, trade, or exchange of tracts of land varies greatly by land ownership. Typically, public agencies and forest industries that are more localized in their operations are better able to quickly adjust their boundaries.

Private landowners often own strategic tracts of land interspersed with public and industrial lands. Given the general desirability of owning forest land surrounded by public lands, working with the owners of these smaller in-holdings can be a strategic way to kick off your implementation effort. The owners of these in-holdings may be valuable members to add to your landscape planning team.

Tip

In-Holdings Project
Members of regional landscape committees in northern Minnesota are working with private landowners that own wooded tracts embedded within major blocks of public forest lands. The goal of the project is to maintain large blocks of contiguous forest land across the landscape on a cross-boundary basis.

The project builds upon efforts developed by the Minnesota Forest Resources Council through its landscape program. Goals established in landscape plans developed by the Council address a variety of landscape-level forest management concerns such as increasing conifers; protecting critical shoreland habitat; and encouraging forests with patch sizes, ages, and species composition that more closely resemble natural patterns and functions.

The landscape plans provide an overarching framework for the development of forest stewardship plans as well as support increased coordination for more effective on-the-ground implementation. By providing landowners with planning and technical assistance through these landscape approaches, the goals of the landscape plans can be more successfully achieved and large blocks of forests can be maintained.

9. Fee Title Acquisition

In some instances, the best solution to sustaining forests in larger blocks is to acquire the private land. However, local governments and the public in general are often concerned about additional public land acquisitions. Public sentiment towards acquistion is often negative because people are concerned about the use of public funds, the loss of the tax [timber] base, and potential restrictions or encroachments on adjoining parcels.

Working through the continuum of optional implementation tools on a landscape stewardship basis provides public agencies with a much stronger case for making the acquisition. Public agency partners should consider landscape stewardship as a fundamental and instrumental part of their acquisition operations. The proverb, “The shortest path is often the longest, the longest becomes the shortest,” often comes into play in the land acquisition arena.

Implementing Landscape Scale Stewardship through Corporate and other Nontraditional Partnerships

Just as partnerships between State agencies and nongovernmental organizations can help reach local forest owners, partnering with the private sector may also open new doors for implementing your landscape Stewardship Plan. Companies are increasingly interested in "social responsibility" and addressing environmental issues.[12] Forming a corporate partnership can generate funding, increase public awareness of the Stewardship Plan, and help you reach a new set of stakeholders. Corporate partnerships are already being used by many nongovernmental organizations, and a variety of models exist (see appendix K).

1. What Makes a Successful Partnership?

A successful corporate partnership must be mutually beneficial. It is important to consider the "business case" for why a company would wish to champion your landscape plan. Requirements for success include:

Supportive Statutory and Political Environment	Nontraditional partnerships require buy in from organization/agency and corporate leaders to be successful. Active engagement by these leaders can help minimize misperceptions and communicate the public value and benefit of the partnership. In addition, there should be a statutory basis or ability to form a partnership.
Continued Involvement	Ongoing monitoring of the partnership is critical to its success. In the case of a nontraditional partnership, both parties need to stay actively engaged and committed to the partnership and goals, employing adaptive management as appropriate to ensure progress and sufficient public and stakeholder awareness, engagement, and understanding.
Detailed Business Plan (or Plan for Collaboration)	As with most successful business efforts, an effective partnership requires a plan, be it a traditional "business plan" or a more nontraditional "plan for collaboration." Such a plan would include clear objectives, an agreed-upon scope, and a marketing and implementation strategy, among other elements. The plan should also clearly articulate the roles, benefits, and responsibilities for each party; the term of agreement; and provisions for modifications and dispute resolution.
Projected Revenue Stream or Benefits	The anticipated benefits of the partnership should be predicted and articulated as clearly as possible. In exchange for funding, marketing, or other technical assistance from a corporation, a nonprofit partner may agree to publicly credit a corporation for its efforts to help preserve "x" acres of northern hardwood forest or generate postitive PR that is anticipated to drive increased store visits and revenue streams for the corporate partner.
Stakeholder Support	Any partnership, but especially a nontraditional one, requires the understanding and support of stakeholders and the public. Clearly communicating the public benefits of the partnership is important, but the public may still have misconceptions or substantial reservations, depending upon the perceived trustworthiness of the actors and the goals of the partnership itself. Not all potential partners will be perceived equally depending upon regional, demographic, and other factors. For example, IKEA may be perceived very favorably in suburban New York, but may not be given favor in a rural town with a recently closed furniture manufacturing plant.

[12] Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a form of corporate self regulation whereby a company makes an effort to take responsibility for its actions and encourage positive social and environmental impacts while still generating an economic profit and/or shareholder returns.

Careful Partner Selection	Selecting the corporate partner that offers the overall "best value" (rather than the lowest cost or some other factor) is critical to a partnership's long-term success. The reputation or brand of each organization will be affected by the partnership effort or project. Therefore, great care should be taken in selecting the best partners. Partnering with a corporation that has responsible domestic wood and fiber sourcing policies but that may take advantage of lax harvesting standards overseas, for example, could be disastrous to the nonprofit or State agency's reputation. The nonprofit or State agency should consider what kinds of partnerships will not only create the most opportunity and leverage in terms of achieving its objectives (dramatically increasing the reach and influence of landscape-scale stewardship efforts) but how well a particular partnership will harmonize with the type of message it is attempting to convey. For example, it may seem ironic or paradoxical for a nonprofit or State agency to try to reach out to small forest landowners and promote nonindustrial private forest land stewardship with a large national chain as a corporate partner, when one of the largest threats that small forests face is development and conversion to big box store strip malls. Instead, a more harmonious and influential partnership may involve partnering with a smaller-scale, regional, or cooperative-type business that delivers value, superior service, a commitment to community, and local ownership. However, this is very much up to local participants, and each partnership opportunity should be evaluated on its own merits.

2. The Value of Partnerships

The value of a partnership can be expressed in terms of its benefits and costs to each partner:
Value = Benefits (what a partner stands to gain) – Costs (what a partner gives up: financial, reputational, and legal costs, among others)

While this equation is overly simple and represents relative, aggregated benefits and costs, it provides an essential framework for moving forward. It is critical that potential project partners carefully consider the values they hope to derive from the project, as well as what value a potential corporate partner might derive, and understand the connection and interplay between the two. While the understanding of the value for/to each party may shift or evolve during partnership development or negotiations, it must be thoughtfully considered as a first step to partnership success. (Subsequent steps may include a much more rigorous financial, strategic, and/or risk analysis). While a State or nonprofit organization interested in creating a corporate partnership may not be able to know or predict the relative benefits and costs from a potential partner's point of view, it can nonetheless try to sketch out a best guess. This will help the State agency or nonprofit pursue reasonable options for partnership, as well as help open the door to discussions when approaching a potential corporate partner.

You can estimate the relative or absolute benefits and costs of the partnership by thoroughly analyzing each partner's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats as they relate to the proposed venture or partnership. This is commonly called a SWOT analysis. Two hypothetical examples—one for a State forestry agency and another for a large corporation in the home improvement industry—are presented below.

Hypothetical SWOT Analysis for a State Forestry Agency	
Internal Factors	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
· Large footprint area in terms of acreage and landowners · Good brand recognition and respect among engaged landowners	· Incremental approach to forest stewardship not achieving desired results · Many landowners still aren't aware of presence or programs (hard-to-reach landowners may require highly targeted messages). Significant distrust or active disengagement among some landowner groups.
External Factors	
Opportunities	**Threats**
· Developing ecosystem service markets presents a new platform through which to engage landowners · Widespread interest in sustainability means that expertise is needed and the mission is supported by an increasingly broad range of stakeholders	· Small average parcel size and diverse landowner base makes effective outreach and targeting expensive and difficult · Poor land-use planning and economic policies encourage sprawl and conversion of forests to nonforest use in many regions · Many factors influence personal and family estate planning and land-use decisionmaking, including healthcare and education costs, retirement planning, and personal preferences

Hypothetical SWOT Analysis for a Corporate Partner in the Home Improvement Industry	
Internal Factors	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
· Large low-cost provider of home improvement supplies · Excellent brand strength and recognition that extends beyond product sales to include home improvement workshops, interior design services, and product installation	· Sustainable practices in sourcing and supply chain management are improving, but has a considerable way to go · From an operations perspective, facilities are energy intensive and have lots of impermeable surfaces (roofs, parking lots), making them vulnerable from a cost and corporate social responsibility perspective
External Factors	
Opportunities	**Threats**
· Certain market segments have untapped potential, but corporation has yet to determine how to most effectively engage these folks · Widespread interest in sustainability means that expertise is needed and the mission is supported by an increasingly broad range of stakeholders	· Strong competition from other low-cost competitors and national hardware cooperatives that offer better assistance and advice · Possibility of needing to disclose climate change risks according to SEC regulation

By examining the corporate partner SWOT analysis, we can begin to understand that the corporate partner has a substantial sustainable operations challenge and potential corporate risk on its hands, in the form of so much impervious surface area. Not only are the big box stores of the world the target of environmental groups advocating for better stormwater management practices, but they are subject to considerable financial risks as some progressive townships and counties begin to reform local water pricing, charging significantly more for water use and applying substantial rebates and discounts for users with excellent stormwater management practices. They are also potentially subject to regulatory risks related to nonpoint source pollution runoff as well as financial risks related to damages from flooding, especially if individual facilities are located in flood zones to begin with.

While such localized, store-by-store risks need to be solved on a local, watershed scale, the company—at a corporate level—is also exposed to considerable aggregate public relations and financial risk. Is there a message, opportunity, or strength that can complement this problem that the corporate partner is facing? If yes, how should it be packaged? If not, what other internal weaknesses or external threats might the corporate partner face that would be relevant to what the State forestry agency (or environmental nonprofit) may offer?

Creating a SWOT analysis for an example corporation in a variety of different industry sectors can help us begin to brainstorm and understand where opportunities may lie. However, a more detailed analysis might require the kind of financial, strategic, or supplier information only available from within the corporation itself. Therefore, it also helps to think in terms of broader, more general strategic reasons for engaging in a "green" or sustainability-themed partnership.

3. The Business Logic for "Green" Partnerships

Within the past decade, we have witnessed a cascade of corporations joining the "green" bandwagon. The capstone of a green commitment often involves making a voluntary commitment to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and this manifests itself in a variety of practice and corporate behavior changes, depending upon the company or industry. While a corporate commitment to "green" need not necessarily manifest itself as a GHG reduction commitment, it is important to note that eliminating excess and waste from the production process often implicitly results in GHG reductions.

Ultimately, corporate strategic benefits from GHG reductions and/or green initiatives fall into seven broad categories, each of which impact the bottom line by decreasing costs and/or increasing profits: 1) operational improvements, 2) lower regulatory compliance costs, 3) reduced cost of capital acquisition, 4) improved risk management, 5) increased market share, 6) new market opportunities, and 7) enhanced human resource management.[13] These seven categories are described beginning on the next page.

[13] Hoffman, Andrew J. Climate change strategy: the business logic behind voluntary GHG reductions. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 2004.

Operational Improvements	Some companies can realize major operational improvements by reducing waste in the supply chain. This may take the form of reducing excess packaging (for example, eliminating plastic or selling more concentrated forms of detergent), optimizing the routes and loads of a trucking or transportation fleet (and/or designing more aerodynamic trucks), reinventing supply chain management using radio-frequency identification to track shelf inventory in real time, and eliminating excess product storage and subsequent warehouse and storage costs.
Lower Regulatory Compliance Costs	A corporate commitment to "green" practices need not be rooted in a conviction—or even a belief—in climate change science. Instead, it may be rooted in a political reality in which future regulation appears likely, while uncertainty about the exact form and timing of that regulation creates waste and inefficiency. Given this reality, some corporations choose to be "early adopters" or even political advocates for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction policies (in particular), far preferring a certain future business climate to one of uncertainty and associated financial risk. This strategy is supported by a high likelihood that early actors will receive credit for their pre-compliance reductions under future climate regulation, and that the benefits of jumping on the learning curve and changing practices early on will prove less costly than being forced to make future mandated changes in short order. While this strategy is most often applied to thinking about GHG reductions, it can be applied to other corporate footprint areas, including water management and use.
(Potentially) Reduced Cost of Capital Acquisition	Reduced capital borrowing costs are a hypothesized, but yet unproven benefit to corporate "green" efforts; conflicting reports indicate that socially responsible firms have, at times, both over and underperformed relative to the S&P 500 and that, in general, Socially Responsible Investing tends to match conventional market funds.[14] However, a (now slightly outdated) report by the Governance Metrics Institute found that companies with excellent governance, labor, and environmental practices significantly outperformed those with decidedly lax practices.[15] It remains whether high social and environmental standards may lead to better performance (which, in turn, makes it easier and cheaper for a company to attract investors; in other words, raise capital). One trend is becoming apparent: government subsidies for the development of alternative energy can help lower the cost of capital acquisition for these projects. However, oftentimes the cost of initial development of these practices can be higher than traditional energy development, simply because the technology is still evolving. What are the ways that a partnership with a State forestry agency or environmental nonprofit can improve the environmental performance and/or profile of a company, thereby potentially contributing to a stronger brand and lowering costs for capital acquisition?

[14] Ceu Cortez, Maria; Silva, Florinda; Areal, Nelson. Socially responsible investing in the global market: the performance of US and European funds (February 13, 2009). Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1342469.
[15] Gunther, M. 2003. Tree huggers, soy lovers, and profits. Fortune, June 9.

Improved Risk Management	In January 2010, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued interpretive guidance on disclosure requirements as they relate to climate change. While the issuance of this guidance does not create new legal requirements or modify existing ones, it does clarify certain facets of disclosure rules related to an increasingly acknowledged business risk: issues related to climate change. SEC disclosure requirements are designed to create increased transparency, thereby providing adequate information to the investment community. While the SEC's guidance makes no judgment on the science or reality of climate change, it does highlight areas where climate change may trigger disclosure requirements to apply. These include: impact of legislation or regulation, impact of international accords, indirect consequences of regulation or business trends, and physical impacts of climate change.[16] As companies are increasingly asked or instructed to disclose these kinds of risks, they may also increasingly seek to engage in activities to mitigate these risks. For example, early actions (precompliance) may become an even greater driving force for business decisions, especially those related to water and climate change. In addition, certain corporations are increasingly likely to make land investment, acquisition, and divestiture decisions, as well as corporate footprint/sustainable operations decisions, that are informed by the SEC's guidance that corporations disclose risks related to physical impacts of climate change. What are the ways that a partnership with a State forestry agency or environmental nonprofit can result in precompliance benefits, mitigate risks related to physical impacts of climate change, and/or mitigate other types of business risks?
Increased Market Share (through Corporate Social Responsibility and "green" products/ marketing).	Cultivating a culture of corporate social responsibility (that includes social and environmental, as well as economic, considerations in business decisions) and/or selling "green" products is a way to build brand loyalty and increase market share. Being "green" may well be a marketing technique, but if the corporate commitment is both substantial and substantiated, this is a legitimate and ultimately strategic way to create or cultivate brand loyalty that can drive bottom line profits. Multiple factors must always be considered; certain customer segments may not respond to green initiatives and marketing, while other customer segments may value "greenness" but may not have a higher willingness to pay. Conversely, some customer segments are extremely responsive, and small sociocultural movements can form around green alternatives (for example, zero-energy home design or hybrid car ownership). Even corporations in industries that would seem antithetical to the green movement have benefited from strategic green marketing efforts. What are the ways that an innovative partnership with a State forestry agency or environmental nonprofit might help a company corporation gain increased access to new markets or a new customer base and/or enhance its corporate image to an extent that impacts its bottom line?

[16] SEC issues interpretive guidance on disclosure related to business or legal developments. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, January 27, 2010. http://www.sec.gov/news/press/2010/2010-15.htm.

New Market Opportunities	The environmental movement in general, and climate change concerns specifically, have led to entirely new fields of industrial and commercial development, as an entire sector of the high-tech industry now specializes in GHG abatement and reduction technologies. Alternative energy sectors related to wind, solar, and biomass have experienced exponential growth, in large part because of the green movement and climate change concerns. Whether a partnership with a State forestry agency or an environmental nonprofit could actually help a company or corporation discover or develop an entirely new market opportunity seems questionable.
Enhanced Human Resource Management	A commitment to green principles can often translate into a competitive advantage when a company is seeking to hire and retain a top-quality workforce. Increasingly, research is demonstrating that for members of Generation Y (20-somethings), "the line between work and home doesn't really exist. They just want to spend their time in meaningful and useful ways, no matter where they are."[17] This translates into Gen Y employees valuing such things as flexible work schedules, volunteer opportunities at the workplace, and the ability to contribute to a goal more meaningful than simply increasing shareholder value and corporate profits. Is there a way that a partnership with a State forestry agency or environmental nonprofit could translate into tangible workplace benefits that give a company or corporation a strategic edge in recruiting, hiring, and retaining top-quality employees, and/or making their employees feel great about where they work?

4. Getting Started

Motivated leaders within regional nonprofit organizations or State conservation agencies may be well positioned to aggregate and work with landowner groups and potential corporate partners to build a partnership that delivers value to both parties while facilitating environmental or forest management objectives. A corporate partner may be particularly helpful in driving a landscape-scale approach to conservation, creating symbiotic outcomes that benefit the community and provide positive public relations.

[17] What Gen Y really wants. TIME. July 5, 2007.

Section 8: Technical and Financial Assistance to Landowners Notes

- Prepare a comprehensive list of tools available in the landscape that enhance the financial viability of owning private forest land. Include cost-share opportunities, tax programs, corporate funding and grants, and conservation easement opportunities as well as traditional and nontraditional forest product markets.

Ask yourself:

What are the negative pressures working against “keeping forests as forests” in the landscape?

What are some existing tools and possible innovative ideas that could mitigate these pressures?

What can be done in the landscape to enhance the perceived value of family-owned forest land?

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Section 9: Tracking Progress through Monitoring and Evaluation

Introduction

For all landscape stewardship projects, monitor what has been accomplished and evaluate the effectiveness of each project's approach to forest stewardship over time.

As with individual landowner plans, begin your landscape stewardship plans with clear goals and objectives. The goals and objectives reflect the needs and interests of local as well as State and regional stakeholders, and ultimately serve as the basis for evaluating and adjusting the plan. Good plans support the short-term monitoring of accomplishments as well as evaluation of the long-term outcomes (the program impacts). Monitoring focuses on tracking what is accomplished, while evaluation seeks to measure program effectiveness.

Monitoring the project's accomplishments related to program activities is generally short term in nature. Evaluating outcomes or results, such as an increase in engaged landowners or increased acres of forest on privately owned lands, takes a longer-term perspective. Monitoring takes place on an ongoing basis or annually whereas evaluation occurs less often.

Monitor Performance, Monitor Accomplishments

Monitoring is a program management function that tracks the accomplishments that result from project inputs such as funded and/or contributed time, materials, and technology—the actions taken by the partners in a landscape project to implement a plan. There is a straightforward relationship between allocation, task performance, and an observable accomplishment. This is how government programs are held accountable for the investment of public funds.

But monitoring and reporting accomplishments, while important for financial accountability, do not necessarily reflect the effectiveness of the program. Results reflect the changed conditions or behaviors resulting from our accomplishments. Typically, it takes more than one year to detect results, which are often expressed as outcomes or trends. We can quantify these outcomes using a variety of assessment methods; if we do it repeatedly, we can develop a trend. Our project's ability to influence outcomes, the objectives of the project, becomes the basis by which we evaluate our success.

What Should be Measured?

It seems there are an infinite number of things that could be measured in any project, including all the inputs, outputs, processes, and outcomes. Some measures are important to you and other program managers, others to oversight authorities, and others to constituent stakeholders. At a minimum, include measurable outcomes specific to the project area and relevant to the project's stakeholders as part of your landscape stewardship project. In addition, the performance accomplishment measures must address the requirements of the Forest Stewardship Program.

The main purpose of tracking progress is to monitor both program impacts and plan objectives over time. For example, the conservation goals may vary for each project, but the program impact—its effectiveness in engaging landowners and their communities—should be monitored consistently.

For any project, use short-term (annual) measures to capture what was done. Align these with longer-term (multiyear) outcome indicators to paint a compelling picture of the benefits of

expanding forest stewardship to a landscape scale. Doing this also provides a foundation for adjusting your plans.

Short Term: Monitor Performance and Evaluate the Process

You can conduct a wide variety of management actions and program activities as part of your landscape stewardship plan. Accordingly, you can use a number of plan-specific measures to track accomplishments and eventually assess your progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of your landscape plan. In addition, there are high-level, more consistent measures that will be collected for all landscape stewardship efforts across all States.

It is important to track the investments and accomplishments for the four stages of a landscape stewardship project. For example:

- Planning: Number of landscape plans initiated, facilitated, or completed
- Coordination: Multiplier value of leveraged CFM program dollars
- Implementation: Number of communities served, number of landowners contacted
- Monitoring: Number of projects being monitored

Planning is a process. When evaluating the process, assess more than the technical quality of the plan. Evaluate other outgrowths of the project, such as the extent to which you developed support for sustainable forestry or for your agency, or increased the capacity of stakeholders to engage in other stewardship endeavors.

Here are some example questions you can use to monitor accomplishments for each of the four phases of your landscape stewardship effort:

Coordination

- Convene and engage interested parties: Who did you engage and how many groups or people did you involve? Did you fail to engage groups or people you should have? Involving many people in the process can develop support for your broader program outcomes and is a valid and useful measure.
- Public review and approval: Did you engage the public beyond the planning group, and what level of public support did you achieve?

Planning

- Analyze your community of interest or place: Did you develop new products, such as maps, that are useful for landowners and community groups to use in their planning? Or perhaps as part of the process, you gathered existing information, such as aerial photos, and made it more available through online means.
- Formulate desired future conditions, goals, and strategies: Did you formulate desired future conditions and develop goals and the strategies to reach them? What are they? This step is the basis for monitoring progress towards achieving the future conditions. This helps you monitor and evaluate the plan long term.

Implementation and Monitoring

- Coordinate, implement, monitor, and evaluate: What is your action plan? What will you do? Who will do it? What resources do you need to implement the plan? This step also helps you monitor whether or not you are achieving the future conditions. This helps you monitor and evaluate the plan long term.

Long Term: Assess Results and Evaluate Effectiveness

Make periodic assessments of whether or not progress is being made towards your project's objectives for at least the intended life of the project plan.

The long-term evaluation of the project should include each desired outcome statement in the landscape stewardship plan and the corresponding measures or indicators used to assess whether or not progress is being made towards achieving that outcome. Unlike short-term evaluation, evaluating outcomes is tied more closely with the objectives of the project, which may be very different from another landscape stewardship project—even within the same State.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As with coordination and implementation, plans can often lack sufficient forethought and consideration for monitoring and evaluation. With a well-rounded committee, the planning process is one of the best opportunities to discuss the appropriate methods for monitoring and evaluation.

During the landscape stewardship planning process, address and discuss what you are going to measure (metrics) and for which areas, who will make the measurements, and when. The vision, goals, and objectives laid out in the plan's policy framework provide the foundation for discussions about measuring both project accomplishments (monitoring) and its outcomes or results (evaluation).

Partners on the planning committee can also be invaluable in identifying who the monitoring and evaluation information should be reported to and during which timeframes. Monitoring is not an implementation strategy. It is primarily a tool to help decisionmakers and managers make better decisions. Feedback on accomplishments and outcomes is important to stakeholders, decisionmakers, and funding appropriators. Landscape stewardship projects need to inform these people on a coordinated and systematic basis.

Monitoring and evaluation are about more than ensuring "accountability." Monitoring and evaluation also provide ways to communicate the value of investments made through landscape stewardship, of making progress toward a shared vision, and for making course corrections along the way.

Coordinated Metrics

Several of the partners around the planning committee table are probably involved with some kind of monitoring for their respective home organizations and interests. Discussing metrics at this stage can build a more cohesive and interchangeable system in your State. Tap your committee's knowledge and incorporate it into your community's landscape-scale plan. Don't let them out the planning process door until you've absorbed their ideas on this last critical phase in landscape management.

Putting It All Together – Suggested Short-Term Performance Measures and Long-Term Outcomes

With new landscape stewardship approaches come new measures and metrics to capture program impacts and effectiveness. A Measures and Metrics Working Group is refining these new reporting metrics and sources of information to be incorporated into accomplishment reporting in FY 2012.

Performance measures

1. Recruited communities – the number of communities within priority forest areas whose decisionmakers have received landscape stewardship outreach and education materials from State or Federal program managers during the fiscal year.
2. Served communities – the number of communities within priority forest areas participating in a landscape stewardship project during the fiscal year.
3. Recruited landowners – the number of targeted private forest landowners within priority forest areas who have received forest stewardship outreach and education materials.

Outcome measures

1. Engaged communities – the number of served communities within priority forest areas that have adopted "forest friendly" policies, incentives, or programs.
2. Engaged landowners – the number and proportion of targeted private forest landowners within priority forest areas who have sought professional resource management advice or employed the services of a professional.

The Measures and Metrics Working Group is developing these annual performance measures and long-term outcomes using the following principles:

- Use a mix of measures that are quantitative and qualitative (success stories are great for informing the public).
- Have a spatial component for the quantitative and qualitative information.
- Not all approaches to monitoring and reporting will be generated by State forestry agencies (for example, the National Woodland Owners Survey may be a source).
- Not all measures are documented every year—some are annual accomplishments and some are cumulative benefits.
- Not all States will report against all measures.
- Measures used by a State should reflect State capacities and priorities as detailed in the *State Forest Action Plan* and annual grant narratives.
- Measures should be able to be documented with resources and reporting systems currently available or adapted as an outgrowth of the Forest Stewardship Project.
- Measures already reported by the States, including the related National S&PF Core Performance Measures and measures reported to PMAS and WebDET, should be included.
- SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.
- Minimize reporting burden on the States.

Section 9: Tracking Progress through Monitoring and Evaluation Checklist and Notes

- £ Monitor the effectiveness of your landscape stewardship project.
- £ Know the stages of your landscape stewardship effort and develop metrics for monitoring each stage: planning, coordination, and implementation.
- £ Share success stories and communicate positive outcomes.

Ask yourself:

What unusual performance measures will your community need that haven't been addressed above?

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APPENDIX A: Work Group Team Members

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APPENDIX B: Glossary

Community of interest: A community of stakeholders working together to address specific issues that may not be geographically limited to a physical landscape.

Community of place: A geographically defined area where community members can collaborate to address their priorities.

Financial viability: The ability of the forest landowner to continue managing according to his or her objectives over the long term, without being unnecessarily constrained by the economic costs or financial burdens of forest land ownership.

Forest Action Plans: Required by the 2008 Farm Bill, Forest Action Plans consist of statewide assessments that identify priority natural resource issues and landscapes and associated strategies that address the priorities identified in the assessment. The State Forest Action Plan serves to guide Federal program delivery and collaboration within the State. Individual State Forest Action Plans and a regional summary of the Forest Action Plans for the area served by Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry can be found at http://www.forestactionplans.org/.

Landscape stewardship: An approach to the conservation of privately owned forest land that seeks to engage all stakeholders within a community of place or interest in developing and implementing collaborative natural resource solutions to social, economic, and environmental issues.

Landscape stewardship plan: One element of a landscape stewardship project. It is a multi-landowner Forest Stewardship Plan written to address landscape-level issues across all ownerships.

Landscape stewardship project: A collaborative effort to achieve desired social, economic, and environmental objectives shared by the stakeholders through community and landowner engagement.

Priority areas: Geographic areas identified in the State's Forest Action Plan where program delivery is essential and should be concentrated to address a priority issue.

Seamless government: Local, State, and Federal agencies working in harmony to deliver benefits, services, outreach, and communications to develop solutions and provide assistance to the communities and landowners within a priority landscape.

APPENDIX C: Acronyms

APA	American Planning Association
CFM	Cooperative Forest Management
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
MFL	Managed Forest Law [Wisconsin Program]
NFWF	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIPF	Nonindustrial Private Forest [Land]
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
PMAS	Performance Measurement Accountability System
REIT	Real Estate Investment Trust
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SFFI	Sustaining Family Forests Initiative
SFI	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TELE	Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively
UVA	Use Value Appraisal [Vermont Program]
WebDET	Web-Based Data Entry Tool

APPENDIX D: Resources for Landscape-scale Approaches

Introduction

There is a large amount of information related to private forest land management. The following technical and financial resources can support landscape stewardship.

A. Financial Resources

There are several funding resources for landscape-scale conservation efforts to keep forests as forests, from private foundations to government agencies.

1. Nonprofit organizations with funding opportunities or resources
    a. Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA) – The mission of EGA is to help member organizations become more effective environmental grantmakers through information sharing, collaboration, and networking. EGA's vision is an informed, diverse, collaborative network of effective grantmakers who are supporting work toward a sustainable world. This page provides links for grant seekers; some organizations may fund landscape-scale approaches. http://www.ega.org/resources/index.php?op=links&issues=8
    b. Partnership Resource Center – The resources section provides a sampling of funding opportunities for projects that include partnerships. http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/resources/funding/
    c. Cooperative Conservation – This Web site's funding opportunities section lists grant opportunities that encourage and reward multiple funding from private and Federal sources. http://cooperativeconservation.gov/funding-opportunities/index.html
    d. Doris Duke Charitable Foundation – This foundation has an environment focus. Its Web site mentions that they specifically have an interest in encouraging land stewardship and sustainability in the tristate (New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut) region. http://www.ddcf.org/Environment/
2. Federal agency funding opportunities
    a. General source to find and apply for Federal grants: www.grants.gov
    b. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): www.epa.gov
        1. Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE): CARE is a competitive grant program that offers an innovative way for a community to organize and take action to reduce toxic pollution in its local environment. http://www.epa.gov/care/
        2. Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Program: Grant funds and direct assistance (through Agency contract support) to facilitate community involvement in area-wide planning approaches to brownfield assessment, cleanup, and subsequent reuse. http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/areawide_grants.htm
    c. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)
        1. http://www.fws.gov/grants/
    d. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
        1. Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) – This Web site provides information about a voluntary conservation initiative that enables the use of certain conservation programs with resources of eligible partners to provide financial and

technical assistance to owners and operators of agricultural and nonindustrial private forest lands. http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ccpi/index.html

2. Community Assistance through the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program – This Web site provides information about how NRCS is assisting communities experiencing development pressure by employing strategic approaches to land use planning and natural resource conservation. http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/commassistance/index.html

e. National Science Foundation – They have a funding section that lists funding opportunities. In the ERE (Environmental Research and Education) division, for example, there is a funding opportunity in the Water Sustainability and Climate section for proposals that may have application to landscape-scale planning. http://www.nsf.gov/funding/

B. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for and information about landscape-scale approaches for keeping forests as forests are available from the following online organizations and government agencies:

1. Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE) – This Web site is designed to help natural resource professionals engage more family forest owners in a meaningful conversation about their woods, and offers data and techniques to help professionals target outreach activities to specific types of landowners. http://www.engaginglandowners.net
2. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy – The Resources section lists Web sites and organizations that support stewardship across boundaries. http://www.lincolninst.edu/subcenters/regional-collaboration/resources.asp
3. Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership – The section on State and Local Governments describes how they can help by advancing policies and practices that recognize the public benefits of a forested landscape that is largely in private ownership. http://www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org/get-involved/state-and-local-governments
4. MassACORN – This Web site provides information about a cooperative resource network for the Westfield and Deerfield watersheds of western Massachusetts. http://www.massacorn.net/
5. American Planning Association – This Web site offers training and workshops on planning in general, some of which focus on landscape-scale planning. http://www.planning.org/education/training/
6. Alliance for Regional Stewardship – The resources section of this Web site contains resources for regional practitioners to support economic, social, and environmental progress in America's metropolitan regions. http://www.regionalstewardship.org
7. Forest Guild Northeast Region Program – The Forest Guild helps develop future forest leaders through training, and advocates supportive forestry programs at State, regional, and national levels. Their Web site contains additional resources about these programs. http://www.forestguild.org/Northeast.html
8. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – The Partnerships section of the NRCS Web site describes a variety of organizations, associations, and teams that work to expand conservation efforts. http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/partners/

9. Growing Forest Partnerships (GFP) – GFP is an international initiative that focuses on facilitating local and international partnerships and investment to support stakeholders in their efforts to improve forest livelihoods and ecosystem services. The Web site contains information about these internationally based forest partnerships. http://www.growingforestpartnerships.org/
10. Forest Landscape Restoration: A Global Partnership – This is an international partnership that promotes an integrated approach that seeks to ensure that forests, trees, and the functions that they provide are effectively restored, conserved, and employed to help secure sustainable livelihoods and ecological integrity for the future. The Web site contains some useful training opportunities and resources. http://www.ideastransformlandscapes.org/
11. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – TNC has a forest conservation program that advances innovative and sustainable forest management solutions for the benefit of people and nature. Their Web site provides information about how TNC is ensuring that "working forests" are responsibly managed across the landscape and with multiple stakeholders. http://www.nature.org/initiatives/forests/
12. Dialogue on Diversity – Broadening the Voices in Urban and Community Forestry: a training module on engaging diverse stakeholders with practical tips on how to do it. Full document at http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/uf/diversity_rpt/diversity_report.pdf and summary at http://nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/3841

C. Web Site

Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry has a Web site for foresters, landowners, and partners who are interested in landscape-scale stewardship. It contains landscape stewardship information, resources, and other tips and how-to documents. http://www.na.fs.fed.us/landscapestewardship/

APPENDIX E: Individual Financial Assistance Programs Potentially Suitable to Landscape-scale Stewardship

Program	Purpose	Practices	Eligibility	Contract	Contact
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) & Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP)	CRP and CCRP reduce erosion, increase wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and increase forest land.	Landowner or operator sets aside cropland (or pasture adjacent to surface water) and receives annual rental payments through the contract period. Cost-share may be available for tree planting, grass cover, small wetland restoration, or prairie and oak savanna restoration.	Varies by soil type and crop history. CCRP funds many practices; eligibility is determined by land and landowner criteria.	10 to 15 years. Contract is transferable with change in ownership. Public access is not required.	NRCS, http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/; your local consulting forester, NRCS representative, or DNR office may also be a conduit for the program.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	Provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to prepare plans and implement management practices on their lands.	All properly implemented forest management practices are eligible, including timber stand improvement, site preparation for planting, culverts, stream crossings, water bars, planting, prescribed burns, hazard reduction, fire breaks, silvopasture, fence, grade stabilization, plan preparation, and more.	Applicant must have at least $1,000 in annual income from agricultural operation or must have nonindustrial private forest land or land capable of growing trees. Funds are directed to projects that offer the greatest environmental benefits.	Contract length from 1 to 10 years. Producers may be eligible for flat rate payments based on average costs of the practices. Public access is not required.	Same as above.
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	CSP rewards forest landowners doing sustainable management by encouraging agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones in their operations.	An annual payment for 5 years is available for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing activities. Annual payments will be $8 to $12 per forested acre, depending on the situation. Payment may not exceed $40,000 in any year and $200,000 during any 5-year period.	Applicants must own or control the land for the term of the 5-year contract. They must also comply with highly erodible land, wetland conservation, and adjusted gross income provisions.	5 years	Same as above.

Program	Purpose	Practices	Eligibility	Contract	Contact
Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)	Provides assistance to develop or improve fish and wildlife habitat.	Prairie and savanna restoration and establishment, fencing, in-stream fish structures, livestock exclusion, tree planting, and more.	All private land is eligible unless it is currently enrolled in CRP, WRP, or a similar program. Each year, certain types of habitat are designated as WHIP priorities. Interested landowners should contact NRCS to learn more about the current year's emphasis.	Agree to maintain practices for a minimum of 5 to 10 years. Cost-share assistance is available for installation of conservation practices, covering up to 75% of costs, with a maximum of $10,000. Land-owners assist with installation costs, and other organizations may provide additional cost-share money. Public access is not required.	Same as above.
Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Program	Provides technical assistance to landowners for resource assessment, practice design, resource monitoring, or follow-up of installed practices.	Technical assistance can help landowners understand practices that can improve water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, recreation, aesthetics, sustainable agricultural practices, and land management technologies.	Anyone who owns or manages land.	None; recommendations are directed toward accomplishing landowner objectives.	Same as above.
Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)	Provides financial assistance (matching payments) to owners and operators of agricultural and nonindustrial private forest land who wish to establish, produce, and deliver biomass feedstocks.[18]	Growing and delivering feedstock to qualifying facilities that produce heat, power, biobased products, or advanced biofuels.	Farmers or forest landowners who produce eligible materials, as defined by the 2008 Farm Bill, with several exclusions (including commodities, animal waste, and food/yard waste).	Farm Service Agency provides dollar-for-dollar matching payments to farmers/forest owners for up to 2 years per participant for the production and delivery of biomass dry tons to qualified facilities.	Farm Service Agency (FSA), http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=ener&topic=bcap; your local consulting forester or FSA representative may also be a conduit for the program.

[18] http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=ener&topic=bcap

APPENDIX F: Example Individual Management Plan Template for Landowners in Minnesota

Landscape Stewardship Project

Your Management Plan
Your management plan is designed to integrate with the Northcentral Landscape Plan. A copy of the Northcentral plan accompanies this individualized report. More information on the Northcentral Landscape plan can be found at www.mfrc.northcentral/landscape plan.com.

Information about You

Your name			
Company name (if applicable)			
Address			
Email address (optional)			
Home telephone		**Alternate phone**	

Your Woodlands

Where your woods are located	
Your local landscape	
Your woodland acres	
Section-township-range	
Tax parcel id number(s)	
Date of meeting with your forester	

Your Forester(s)

Your forester		**Their phone number**	
Your local DNR office		**Office phone number**	

1. **Goals for your woodlands**
   1. List as many goals as necessary to record all of the landowner's needs
   2.
   3.

2. **Overview of your property**
   This would be a paragraph describing the landowner's property. This could be written as indepth as the State or landowner or program required. For example, the property overview might have a few extra components if the landowner intends to use this plan to enroll their property into a property tax program. For landowners not interested in the tax programs, this section could contain less detailed information. This section could be written by stand, or maybe simply a general overview of the property.

3. **Map of your property**

4. **Appendix**

5. **Recommendations and schedule of events**
   This is arguably the most important section of the streamlined plan. I have noted many times that the benefit of landscape planning is being able to provide the landowner an overview of their landscape and how they fit into it and, most importantly, the ability to focus on projects, not just planning. This is the section where the projects will be listed. This list should be revisited every time that activity occurs.

Table 1. Projects to help you achieve your goals.*

Project or activity	Acres	***Estimated*** cost or revenue	Timeline	Who can help	Financial implications	Which landscape goal is this project/activity attempting to address?
Tree planting, with a focus on planting white pine	11.5	$3,450 ($300/acre)	Spring 2011	Local NRCS and DNR staff	EQIP dollars available – up to $2,590 available for this project	Increase the forest's component of long-lived pine species
Attken County landowner's workshop on timber stand improvement	n/a	$10	February 23, 2011	Attken County SWCD – contact Tom Delton for more details at 555-555-5555	n/a	Improve the health and vigor of northern hardwood stands to prepare for an EAB infestation
Harvest mature aspen	32	Estimated revenue of $11,491 (32 acres x 19 cords/ac x $21/cord) – 10% fee to forester	Winter of 2011/12 (frozen ground conditions to protect soil resources)	Consulting forester Jeff Temer (777-777-7777)	n/a	Improve the health and vigor of northern hardwood stands to prepare for the arrival of EAB

Add as many rows as needed – should be updated easily on a yearly basis.

APPENDIX G: Community of Place v. Community of Interest

"Community of Place" Model Plan

The Four Corners Pilot Forestry Project

The Four Corners Pilot Forestry Project was initiated in fall 2005 by the Minnesota Forest Resource Council's (MFRC) East Central Regional Landscape Committee, shortly after they completed their regional forest management plan. The MFRC is a 17-member organization working to promote long-term sustainable management of Minnesota's forests by coordinating implementation of the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act. Citizen-based regional landscape committees of the MFRC Landscape Program have developed forest resource management plans (landscape plans) for each of the State's six forested regions.

The East Central Regional Landscape Committee decided that they needed to focus efforts on a smaller area within their 3.6 million-acre region to begin carrying out their regional plan. They selected a specific geopolitical area, the four townships at the crossroads of four counties (Kanabec, Pine, Isanti, and Chisago), that would maximize connections with rural communities across the nine-county region through one project. This intersection of four counties is the only such geographic condition in the region.

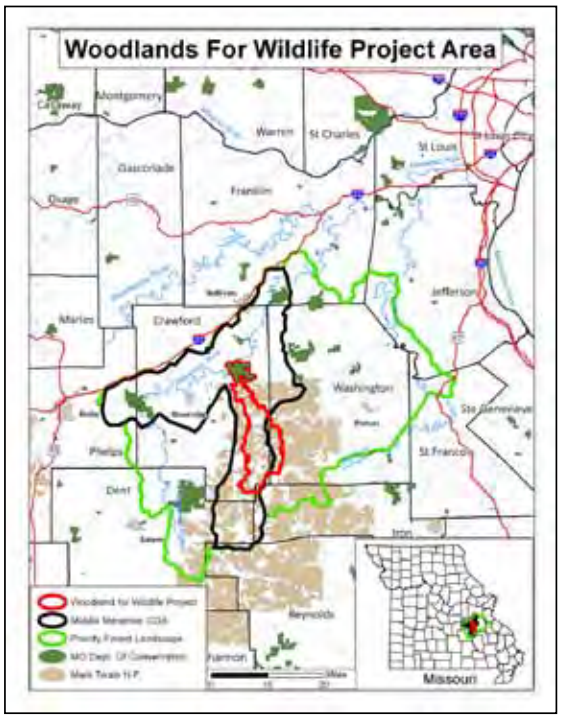
The four-township project area covers approximately 95,000 acres, including a 1,500-acre recreational lake and the Snake River. These amenities, plus the easy commuting distance to Minneapolis-St. Paul via Interstate 35, located along the eastern side of the project area, make it a highly desirable rural setting. Recent development patterns reflect these desires, especially in the southern portion of the project area. The southern counties (Chisago and Isanti) are two of the fastest growing counties in the State. Forest land cover in the project area has been reduced by almost 80 percent since before European settlement. Today, cropland and pastureland are the dominant land use activities and cover about 55 percent of the area. Rural residential uses are replacing farmland and remaining forests.

As a result of the historical land cover changes and increased nutrient transport with stormwater runoff, the lake and river have both been placed on the State's impaired water list. In response, the committee quickly identified two major goals for the project: 1) increase forest land cover and 2) improve water quality. Over the past 5 years, the committee has sought to develop stronger working relationships, support targeted landowner education, and increase the amount of land under forest stewardship, including implementation of cost-share projects. This past year, the committee has further focused efforts in Nessel Township to intensify the coordination of service delivery to landowners.

"Community of Interest" Model Plan

The Middle Meramec Conservation Opportunity Area Partnership

The Meramec River Basin is very large, covering approximately 2.5 million acres. It is comprised of three 8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code watersheds: the Meramec, the Big, and the Bourbeuse. Multiple factors, including the likelihood of development, large forest patch size, public drinking water supply, and wildlife habitat, resulted in portions of the Meramec River Basin being classified as a Priority Forest Landscape in Missouri's 2010 Forest Action Plan.



The Middle Meramec Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), nestled within the greater Meramec River Basin, was identified in the 2004 Missouri Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy as a place where a number of Species of Conservation Concern (SOCC) are at risk. The federally listed Indiana and gray bat, and three (soon to be four) federally listed species of freshwater mussels are found in the basin. Beyond providing bat habitat, the forests of this area also serve as important summer habitat for several Neo-tropical migrant song birds.

The entire basin provides important habitat for the SOCC mentioned above. Where should management activities begin? The Missouri Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy helped in this regard by identifying the Middle Meramec COA. However, the COA covers about 440,000 acres—still too large an area in which to begin working effectively with landowners. The project team made up of conservation professionals from several entities has identified a 63,000-acre landscape within the COA to address first. The project to be developed in this area has been named *Woodlands for Wildlife.* Since the majority of forested land within the Meramec Basin is in private ownership, a landscape approach to forest stewardship is an important way to maintain and restore habitat critical for the SOCC mentioned above. The forests of the region are generally overstocked, and most need to be thinned to remain healthy and provide the type of habitat required by several declining bird species. Forested riparian corridors help provide clean water for high-quality aquatic habitat, and they also provide foraging areas for bats. Management practices carried out by private landowners in the basin will be a very important way to achieve conservation goals for the area. Since there is no effective geopolitical jurisdiction in the COA, the project coalesced around a community of interest sharing a stake in the natural resource objectives.

Conclusion

The two model landscape stewardship projects presented above benefited from the collaboration among conservation organization staffs that were aware of and sensitive to local interests and concerns. The State government staff in each case study intentionally avoided a top-down approach when working with prospective community leaders and landowners. Citizens *want* agency staff to

share expert knowledge with them about potential resource management opportunities, but they do *not* want the message to be delivered in a heavy handed way or through top-down mandates. It should also be noted that while these two community-based projects have been maturing for several years, they still have a distance to go to be truly successful.

Coordinated and systematic outreach efforts are key to initiating landscape stewardship planning. To help initiate landscape-scale stewardship projects, encourage and support multiple conversations that take place simultaneously and in a coordinated fashion, both from the bottom-up and top-down perspectives. Have teams of public and private conservation staff take active roles in identifying potential areas for landscape stewardship planning with their constituents. Consider using priority issues and areas from your State's Forest Action Plan as a starting point for outreach efforts with local groups.

Be supportive of this outreach work well in advance of a landscape stewardship project being proposed. Integrate strategic outreach into your statewide stewardship programs. Success in initiating landscape stewardship projects depends on continuously engaging servicing agencies and businesses. If left to one or a few staff persons or operators, the landscape stewardship effort may not turn out to be a very successful endeavor. The best work on the ground results when people are engaged in a conservation culture at the project or community level with a complement of service providers. When this scenario is coupled with guidance from a well-prepared landscape stewardship plan, more win-win-win accomplishments on privately owned forest land will occur.

Use caution and patience when using the new terms or concepts emerging in landscape stewardship—such as community of place or community of interest—when you work with landowners as well as local groups and organizations. Focus on local needs and concerns. People can get hung up over words, so take care to define terms and concepts as the process evolves. Meet people where they are.

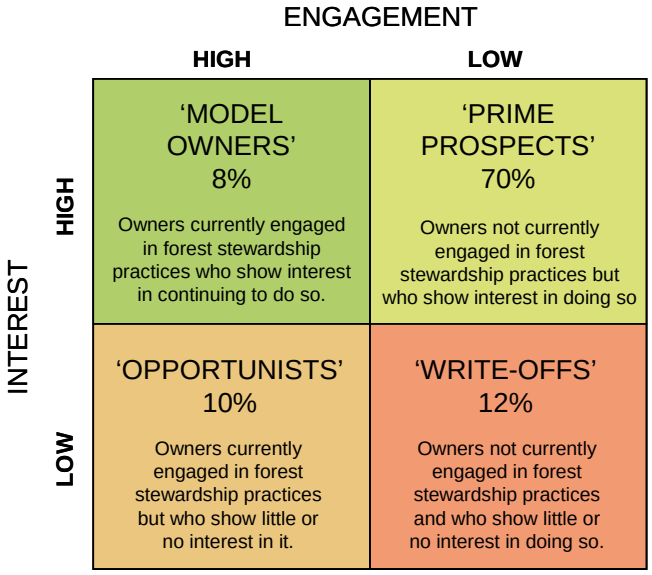
It takes time and commitment to engage community leaders and landowners to support landscape projects. Although engaging communities and individuals starts in the planning process, it needs to continue throughout the three other phases of landscape stewardship. Effectively engaging landowners and their communities requires persistence and long-term commitments across all four project phases.

APPENDIX H: Applying the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative (SFFI) Segmentation Scheme to Conservation Marketing

Opportunities to Expand Stewardship's Reach and Influence

Research indicates that about 15 percent of all family forest owners (25 percent of the acreage) across the Northeast and Midwest are currently "engaged" in the management of their woodlands. By "engaged", we mean owners who consult foresters, participate in programs such as cost-sharing or conservation easements, and are generally making good stewardship decisions on their land. This is the group of landowners we often work with. They will come to us for assistance on their own, and thus fit right in with the "first come, first served" landowner service model that many State forestry agencies practice. While easy to implement and politically expedient, working this way tends to keep us busy with the same group of landowners – those with whom we are comfortable, or who know how to ask for assistance. We do good work with these folks, but we need to have an impact on more and different privately owned forest land.

The best opportunity for expanding the reach and influence of forest stewardship lies with landowners described as "Prime Prospects" by the Family Forest Research Center (see graphic).


ENGAGEMENT
HIGH
LOW
INTEREST
HIGH
LOW
'MODEL OWNERS'
8%
Owners currently engaged in forest stewardship practices who show interest in continuing to do so.
'PRIME PROSPECTS'
70%
Owners not currently engaged in forest stewardship practices but who show interest in doing so
'OPPORTUNISTS'
10%
Owners currently engaged in forest stewardship practices but who show little or no interest in it.
'WRITE-OFFS'
12%
Owners not currently engaged in forest stewardship practices and who show little or no interest in doing so.

Prime Prospects are landowners who are not currently engaged in managing their forests (for example, they don't have management plans, they don't consult foresters, and they don't participate in programs such as cost-sharing or conservation easements), yet they think managing their forest land is a good idea, *and* they are interested in doing so.

It is encouraging to know that as many as 70 percent of all private forest landowners in our 20-state region fall into the Prime Prospects category! Yet only 23 percent of all landowners across the region say they've "sought advice" on woodland management. One clue to engaging Prime Prospects has to do with management intentions. Most landowners report that they intend to *do nothing*, or nearly nothing, on their forest land for the next 5 years (National Woodland Owner Survey 2010). Our challenge is to figure out *why* they intend to do nothing, *how* to communicate with them, and finally *what* will motivate them to take a more active role in the stewardship of their forest land … to begin making decisions that contribute to their personal objectives while also contributing to the needs of the broader community.

"Low participation may reflect the desires and attitudes of the forest owners, but it may also be caused by less than optimal efforts at outreach by program administrators (e.g., only 24 percent in total have received advice or information about their forest in the past 5 years)." (Roper)

Understanding Landowner Behavior

Who are these Prime Prospects? We all know that they are a varied group. Even at the county level, forest landowners own their property for many different reasons, and expect different benefits from their lands. They may reside on their land, or be absentee landowners living in the city. They may own their land primarily for hunting, or own it as a sanctuary for wildlife because they oppose hunting. They may derive income from their land, either from agricultural operations or from forest management activities; or the thought may never have crossed their mind that they could make money from their land because all they are looking for is a peaceful place to spend the weekend.

To help make sense of these differences, the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) has identified key variables that help us understand why landowners do what they do—or don't do. Why someone owns forest land is the most significant factor affecting how he or she uses it—and consequently, what society can expect from it. This is the crux of our conservation marketing approach. In order to meet our community/societal objectives, we first have to understand and then help landowners meet their objectives. Using NWOS data, the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative (SFFI) has identified four landowner segments in our region based on this variable:

	Woodland Retreat	Working the Land	Supplemental Income	Uninvolved Owners
Share of Prime Prospects in NA	56%	28%	6%	10%
Orientation to forest land	· Own woodland primarily for its beauty and recreational value · Many love nature and animals and appreciate ecological benefits of woods	· Tend to be pragmatic; value aesthetic and recreational benefits of woodland but also see woods as a financial asset	· Tend to own land primarily for timber income and investment	· Tend not to care about woods; assign low importance to their financial, recreational, or aesthetic benefits
Ownership objectives	· Stewardship ethic · Natural beauty and wildlife protection · Enjoyment of woods with family members, e.g., walking, hiking, camping, and fishing	· Maximizing ongoing returns from woods without damaging the land ecologically or financially · Ethic of respectful and judicious land use · Fiercely possessive of land; reject any restrictions on land use · Enjoy recreation on land (including hunting); also enjoy tending their woods	· Want to maximize financial benefit from woodland · Concerned with long-term health of land (mainly to ensure it stays financially productive) · Want to keep land intact for heirs · Especially concerned about fire, pests, and other threats that can damage vast tracts of land	· Want to reduce taxes and land management hassles · Want to minimize problems on the land (e.g. vandalism, trespassing) · Many in "holding pattern" until they can figure out what to do with the land or pass it on to the next generation · Want to keep land intact for heirs

There are other factors that also influence a forest landowner's behavior, including:

- **Parcel Size** – People with larger parcels tend to see woodlands as a financial asset and often have a family tradition of land ownership. Larger parcels are associated with regular timber harvests, employment of foresters, participation in government programs, and greater concern for restrictions on land use.
- **Land Tenure** – Owners who have inherited their land are often most concerned about keeping it intact and passing it on to their heirs. New owners tend to be less knowledgeable but also more open to advice and information.
- **Residence** – People who live on their woodland are usually more emotionally attached to it than people who don't. They spend more time in their woods, and may know their woods better.
- **Farming** – Farmers tend to have a deep understanding of land management and a pragmatic approach to tending and managing woodland. However, they value farm land more than woodland, and prefer to attend to their agricultural holdings.

It's easy to see the importance of understanding who our landowners are, and why they do what they do before approaching them with the "opportunity" to participate in a forest stewardship program.

How to Communicate with Landowners

As natural resource professionals we know that one-on-one conversation with landowners is the best way to influence them. This is because we intuitively tailor our conversations to the knowledge level, values, and style of our conversation partners. We mirror their language, reflect their values, and try to build on the common ground we share with them. Landscape stewardship will help us do the same thing on a larger scale.

By targeting our outreach activities to specific landowner segments, we will speak more meaningfully and persuasively to landowners, thus improving our conservation marketing results. Targeting works because it pushes us to understand the people we're trying to reach and find ways to connect with them.

The SFFI offers a number of suggestions for communicating effectively with forest landowners. Solve their problems … address their concerns:

	Woodland Retreat	Working the Land	Supplemental Income	Uninvolved Owners
Ownership concerns ("greatly concerned")	· Keeping the land intact for heirs · Insects & diseases · Fear of trespassers · High property taxes	· Insects & diseases · Keeping the land intact for heirs · High property taxes · Fear of trespassers · Wildland fire	· Wildland fire · Insects & diseases · Keeping the land intact for heirs · Fear of trespassing or poaching · High property taxes	· Keeping the land intact for heirs · High property taxes · Insects & diseases · Wildland fire · Fear of trespassing or poaching

An old marketing maxim states that, “People buy holes, not drills.” In other words, sell the solutions, not the products. The easiest way to get landowners to pay attention to our materials is to lead with the solutions they are already seeking. Once we have their attention, we can give them new information and ideas.

- **Connect through shared values**. Highlight the values we share with landowners and let them know we understand their perspective on the issue (even if it is different from ours). This makes our message more believable and relevant to our audience.
- **Recognize differences**. Landowners love their land for different reasons and express it in different ways. Don't ally yourself with the timber or any other industry, or with any group of service providers. Conversely, avoid taking an environmentalist perspective; landowners will respond best if they see us as an unbiased resource that is not wedded to any ideology or industry.
- **Get real**. Make sure people have the resources to do what we're asking them to do. And if our "ask" doesn't fit with their world view at all, back up a little—perhaps we can ask them to do something else that fits within their resources, is less intimidating, and/or more acceptable.
- **Avoid jargon**. Don't use technical terms that might be familiar to us but not to our audience. Instead, use language that landowners use themselves:

Words to use	Words to avoid	Notes and explanation
Woods, woodland, woodlot	Forest	Woodland owners refer to their forested land as woods, and it evokes a warm feeling. Forests bring to mind larger tracts of land, usually owned by governments or corporations.
Woodland owner or landowner	Family forest owner	See above. Landowner works because many woodland owners see their woods as part of an overall land-holding that includes a home, a farm, or pasture land.
Respecting the land, looking after the land	Technical terms like sustainable land management, stewardship, conservation, preservation	Be careful not to assume an environmentalist mindset. Many landowners, even those who want to take care of their land, don't identify with environmentalism.
Wildlife, critters	Animal population, specific animals (like deer)	Animal population is too sterile. Since landowners differ in what animals they regard as attractive or "pests," talking about attracting specific animals could backfire.
Recreation, enjoy the land	Hunting (which some people love but others hate)	Hunting is an issue on which landowners are sharply divided; it elicits strong emotions.
Harvesting trees	Logging, timbering	Harvesting implies a more thoughtful removal of trees with the health of the woods in mind.
Keeping woods healthy	Silviculture, forestry	Landowners don't want to learn technical terms.
Common names of flora and fauna	Technical names of flora and fauna	Landowners will be more likely to read the material and remember it.

- **Lead Strongly**. Communicators often list all the reasons to take a particular action, hoping that people will focus on the ones that make most sense to them. That's asking people to do too much work—if they don't see a good reason up front, they won't pay attention to our message. Lead strongly with one or two points that are likely to resonate with each landowner segment:

	Woodland Retreat	Working the Land	Supplemental Income	Uninvolved Owners
How to reach this segment	· Give them specific, easy, low-cost actions to achieve their objectives (e.g. attracting wildlife) · Challenge their belief that woods are best left alone · Help them understand the ecological significance of all woodlands · Appeal to their sense of responsibility and stewardship · They like to receive information through printed materials or talking with a natural resource professional. Videos and Internet are also useful.	· Affirm their outdoorsy lifestyle and simple, traditional values · Give them information but don't tell them what to do--accept their independence and cautiousness · They actively seek information on land management; most like getting information through word of mouth, although relevant publications and direct mail also work	· Emphasize ways to enhance financial gains or maintain land value for future generations · Ready to learn more about land management--especially if it yields immediate or long-term financial benefits · Most keyed to the forest industry and "forestry" community, including landowner associations, trade publications, and events	· Not an easy target for conservation or woodland management campaigns · Messages should identify direct financial benefits, preferably without too much effort on their part · May be more receptive to incentives and programs that benefit both farms and woods · Can be reached by direct mail and traditional channels to reach farming community

According to the Family Forest Research Center, the basic principles of this approach are:

1. *Design your materials to appeal to a specific type of landowner*. Different types of landowners are persuaded by different arguments and incentives. It therefore makes sense to design materials for specific groups that share similar values and will be persuaded by the same messages.
2. *Make sure that your audience is exposed to your message several times and in the right contexts*. Do you remember all the advertisements you saw on TV last night or all the billboards that lined your route to work? Neither do the people you want to reach! We have to work hard to get people's attention. And most people need to see or hear (preferably both!) a message several times before they decide to act on it.
3. *Listen to your target audience*. Good communication, like good conversation, is a two-way exchange. Get landowner input before designing your marketing campaign, then seek feedback both during and after you implement the campaign.

The five *most* preferred methods of receiving information are:

- Books & pamphlets
- Talking with a forester
- Newsletters & magazines
- Internet
- Videos

The five *least* preferred methods are:

- Joining an organization
- Talking with a logger
- Attending a conference or workshop
- Visiting others' woodlands
- Talking with other owners

NWOS 2010

Motivating Forest Landowners to Act

We now have a sense of why people own forest land, and how to effectively communicate with the various landowner segments that make up the Prime Prospects we're seeking to influence. What we have to keep in mind is that targeted marketing means designing communications to bring about a specific behavior change in a selected group of people. We are reaching out to small groups of people with tailored messages that are most likely to appeal to the people in each group, based on our understanding of that group's values, preferences, and other characteristics. This will help us move beyond our traditional audience and begin to engage the vast reservoir of Prime Prospects.

And you'll recall, conservation marketing is about the "trans-action." Be clear about what you want people to do after they hear or read your message. We emphasize do because it is always more effective to design your marketing campaign with clear action outcomes in mind. Yes, you want to educate or inform your audiences, but you really need them to take action if your program is to be a success. Studies of family forest owners across the Northeast and Midwest suggest that we may be successful at motivating Prime Prospects to become "engaged" in forest stewardship by:

1. Making them aware of the personal benefits of managing their forests; and
2. Connecting them with information and assistance resources appropriate to their needs.

Between reasons for owning forest land and concerns over issues that may impact land ownership, we have some powerful talking points vis-à-vis community incentives and policies (what the community can offer) and the adoption of stewardship practices that mitigate landowner concerns while contributing to ownership objectives.

	Woodland Retreat	Working the Land	Supplemental Income	Uninvolved Owners
Barriers to becoming good stewards	· Lack of knowledge about what actions to take · Perception that woods manage themselves · Many have small (cost inefficient) parcels of land · Financial constraints	· Fixed ideas about what is good for woods; feel they know best · Mistrust of outside authority and expertise · Wary of any limitations imposed on them	· Skeptical of most programs that impose restrictions on land use · Need to be convinced that stewardship behaviors are cost effective	· Lack interest and/or knowledge to improve/manage their woods · Opposed to any restriction on land use rights
These landowners are seeking information about...	· Land improvement (trails, ponds, streams, etc.) · How to attract wild life · Keeping the woods healthy, beautiful, and good for wildlife · How to choose reliable loggers and other service providers · Financial assistance for improving or maintaining their land	· Timber market trends and rates · How to choose reliable loggers and other service providers · Protecting woods from natural and human threats · Entrepreneurial activities like cultivating NTFPs (to garner extra income from woods)	· Timber markets · Government programs, especially tax incentives and cost-share programs · How to protect their legacy; estate transfer issues · How to maintain the long-term health and value of the land · Emerging threats and invasive species	· Ways to minimize land maintenance and management costs · Estate planning and land transfer

Because of their different backgrounds, interests, ages, and educational levels, subgroups of forest landowners get their information through different media types and sources. Given their different ownership objectives, they also respond to different motivational triggers; some are interested in money, but most are not. This all leads to the conclusion that we can't just communicate with something called "forest landowners" and hope to expand the reach and influence of forest stewardship.

APPENDIX I: Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE)

Welcome to TELE

This Web site is designed to help natural resource professionals engage more family forest owners in a meaningful conversation about their woods.

Most natural resource professionals know that one-on-one conversations with landowners are the best way to influence them. This is because we intuitively tailor our conversations to the knowledge level, values, and style of our conversation partners. We mirror their language, reflect their values, and try to build on the common ground we share with them.

This site will help you do the same thing on a larger scale. It offers data and techniques to help you target your outreach activities to specific types of landowners. This will allow you to speak more meaningfully and persuasively to landowners, thus improving the outcomes of your outreach and yielding results like these:

- Of 20 people at your presentation, 15 follow up to get more information.
- You have to close outreach for the forest stewardship program 3 weeks early because you've already enrolled as many landowners as you can serve.
- Your latest ad campaign elicits requests for material from 1,000 landowners, most of whom have never contacted your organization before.

This resource has been developed by the Sustaining Family Forests Initiative (SFFI) using data from the National Woodland Owner Survey. The SFFI is a collaborative of Federal and State forestry and conservation agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that realize private landowners play a crucial role in sustaining and nurturing our natural resources. It is coordinated by the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the U.S. Forest Service's Family Forest Research Center.

Start Your Plan

This tool will systematically walk you through six steps for developing a targeted and focused communication plan. At each step, it will guide you through key decisions and point you to the information you need. The program will record your input at each stage and compile it into a communication plan. You can share this document with your colleagues and consultants so that everyone is on the same page regarding the purpose, target audiences, messages and style of your communication.

Every page of this tool has three tabs. The Overview tab describes what you need to decide at this planning stage and why that decision is important. The Tips and Ideas tab offers some helpful strategies to clarify your thinking and directs you to relevant information about landowners. The last tab—Instructions and Example—poses specific questions that you should address when entering your input. It also shows you how one campaign—Call Before You Cut (CBYC)—addressed these questions in its communication plan. We have used the CBYC campaign as an example for all the stages so you can see how the decisions made at each stage fit with each other.

Here are some technology-related tips to help you use this tool:

- After each step, click the Save & Continue to Next Step button to save your work so far and take you to the next section.
- In some places, you will be able to click to see more resources and materials. Some of these additional materials will open in a new window to save your place in your plan. This will work more smoothly if your browser is set to open new windows in tabs.
- To store your work on the Web site so you can finish, view, or edit it later, you must create a login ID. To do this, click the Save Online for Later button.
- After you are done, you can download your plan as a PDF file by clicking the Save to PDF Now button. This button does not save the plan on the Web site; to do that, you must use the Save Online for Later button. We recommend saving to PDF only after you have finalized your plan and are ready to print it.

Step 1: Objective

Overview

All marketing communication is about influencing your target audience's thoughts and actions.

The first step toward creating effective communication is to be clear about what change you want in your audience. This is your communication objective. It should be a simple sentence that says what you want your audience to do after they receive the communication.

A communication objective is not the same thing as the mission of your organization. It is also narrower than your overall program goal(s). It simply refers to a particular action by the target audience, which will help achieve your program goals and further the mission of your organization.

For example, if you are a State forestry division, your organizational goal may be to improve the health of the forests in your State. You might then launch a program whose goal is to get more families who own woodland acres to manage their woodlands more sustainably. To further that program, you might design materials with one or more of the following communication objectives:

- To get more landowners to seek information about sustainable forest management
- To get more landowners to develop written stewardship/management plans
- To get more landowners to follow their stewardship plans

Tips & Ideas

1. **Focus on behavior.** Behavioral objectives are better than attitudinal objectives. Try to think of what you want your audience to do after they get your message. Is it to seek more information about conservation easements? Join a cost-share program? Contact a forester? Plant more trees? Try to express your objective with action words. Avoid phrases like "be more educated."

Even when designing an educational piece, think about what you want target audience members to be able to do after receiving your communication. For example, a precise and action-oriented objective for an educational presentation may be: “Woodland owners will be able to recognize common pests and invasive species and take steps to protect their woods.”

2. **Be realistic**. Match the scope of your objective to the scale and medium of the communication effort (for example, print, TV, Internet, or in person). If you're planning an entire campaign, with many different materials, you can set a broad communication objective with more specific objectives for each communication product. But if you're designing a single piece, try to have one clear target behavior for your audience.

For example, if you're designing an advertisement poster, "More landowners will manage their woods more sustainably" is an unrealistically ambitious objective. Can one poster actually accomplish that? It is better to focus your poster on specific target behaviors, such as:

- Landowners will seek more information about managing their woods sustainably
- More landowners will consult a forester before cutting trees
- More landowners will request information about conservation easements

3. **Be specific.** Specific and clear objectives provide better guidance for the content and style of the material. If the objective is too vague (like "raising public awareness"), it will be hard to design a campaign that has a real and measurable impact.

Here are some sample objectives for a presentation to a group of landowners:

- Landowners will come away with a good understanding of our State's cost-share program (OK)
- Landowners will understand how our State's cost-share program can help them (better, because it clarifies that you want to focus on the benefits to landowners)
- Eligible landowners will contact us for more information about the cost-share program (also better, because it focuses on a specific action)

4. **Link to program goals**: When considering several possible communication objectives, choose the one that is most logically and directly linked to your program objectives.

5. **Make sure it's doable**: Make sure that your audience has the means to take the actions you are recommending. If not, you can either promote a different behavior that furthers the same program objective or direct audience members to relevant services or resources.

Instructions & Example
To arrive at your communication objective, answer the question: What would you like your audience to do as a result of this communication effort?

Also consider these questions:

- How does this communication objective advance your program goal?
- Is your communication objective matched to the scope of the effort?

The Call Before You Cut (CBYC) team developed this communication objective for the campaign: *More landowners will consult a professional forester before cutting trees.*

CBYC's broad program goal is to improve the quality of logging so that forests can be sustained and environmental problems can be prevented. CBYC believes that if more landowners consult professional foresters before harvesting, the quality of logging will improve. This assumption ties the program objective (i.e., improve quality of logging) to the CBYC's communication objective (i.e., get landowners to consult professional foresters before logging).

Write your communication objective here and say how it relates to your program or conservation goals:

Step 2: Define Audience

Overview

If you design your materials to appeal to everybody, you may end up convincing no one at all.

As we've seen in the segment descriptions, landowners are not a homogeneous group—their decisions about their land are grounded in different motives and considerations, and they are swayed by different arguments and incentives. That's why knowing your audience—which is really several different types of people who share the characteristic of woodland ownership—is critical to success.

By segmenting your audience, you can tailor your communication to address what is most meaningful to them. The concept is simple—if you identify various small segments of landowners who have a similar orientation to their woodland, you can design communications that reflect their values, address their concerns, acknowledge their perspective, and speak their language. You can also make your outreach more efficient by disseminating materials via channels that are most likely to reach a given audience segment (for example, Working the Land Owners or Woodland Retreat Owners). When done right, the "return" on this communication—the proportion of people persuaded—is much greater.

So, think about what primary audience segment you want to reach through this communication. Remember, these are not the only people who will respond to your communication—just those whom you want to persuade most strongly. Even if you define your target audience quite narrowly, your materials will reach and influence others too.

If you are considering a comprehensive suite of materials, you can also define influencer or intermediary audiences. These are groups of people who can carry your message to your primary audience and/or help influence their decisions. If their influence is important enough, you might want to consider designing specific materials for these groups.

For a campaign promoting conservation easements, for example, tax professionals or estate planners may be important influencer audiences. For a program to quell the spread of invasive plant species, hunting and wildlife groups may be important intermediaries to help reach landowners.

Tips & Ideas

1. The easiest way to identify your primary target audience is to choose a segment that is most likely to respond favorably to your communication objective. The SFFI has identified four basic types of landowners. Each type has a somewhat different orientation to their land and to their role as landowners. As a result, they see their land-management roles differently and respond to different kinds of messages that fit with their idea of their role.

2. You can also target a specific segment based on the composition of landowners in your area. That way, your materials will speak most directly to the most prevalent type of landowner. To further refine this geographic analysis, the SFFI has identified "Prime Prospects"—landowners who have a stewardship mindset but are not yet engaged in active management of their woodland. You can pick an audience based on which landowner segment is most prevalent in your State or, more specifically, which segment is most prevalent among the Prime Prospects in your State. Click here to learn which segments are most prevalent in your area.

3. Here are some other ways to define meaningful audience segments for your communication:

- People who can have the maximum impact on a particular environmental problem.
  For example, people who own land in a particularly sensitive geographic region, have larger tracts of land, or can influence other landowners, etc.

- People who have already done a specific behavior and are ready to take the next step.
  For example, if you want to encourage people to follow up on their management plans, the target audience for this communication should be people who already have written management plans.
- A particular demographic or interest group that you have the opportunity to reach via a particular channel or event.
  For example, a brochure or article prepared for members of Ducks Unlimited is likely to be read by landowners who hunt. For this brochure, you may specifically want to target landowners who hunt.
- People who are in a similar demographic category or life situation that determines their interest in a particular conservation topic or activity.
  For example, aging landowners are a good target audience for communications about planning for the future of their land, young families may be most receptive to communications promoting children's educational programs, and recent retirees may be a good audience for information about tax-relief programs for landowners.

Instructions & Example
First determine your primary target audience—who are the people you most want to reach and influence through this effort?

Then answer the following:
- Why have you chosen this audience as your primary target?
- What other groups will also be influenced by your message, even though they are not your primary target?
- Will you design materials for intermediary or influencer audiences?

Here is how the CBYC campaign addressed these questions:

The primary target audience for the CBYC campaign is Working the Land woodland owners in six States—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, and West Virginia.

The selection of Working the Land Owners was based on:

- The prevalence of different SFFI segments in the campaign States; and
- The relevance of the communication objective.

Most Prime Prospect landowners in the six campaign States fell into two groups—Working the Land Owners and Woodland Retreat Owners. Of these two, Working the Land Owners were more likely to harvest trees for timber and to believe in active management and productive use of their woodland. Therefore, they were the better prospects for this campaign.

Campaign materials are relevant to all landowners who are planning harvests and are willing to invest time and effort into harvesting trees in the best possible way. This includes many Supplemental Income landowners and a few Woodland Retreat Owners.

No materials will be designed for intermediary or influencer audiences.

Identify your primary target audience. Be as specific as possible.

List other audiences that will also be reached. Identify important intermediary or influencer audiences (if any).

Step 3: Profile Your Audience

Overview

An audience profile is a summary of those attributes of your target audience segment that are relevant to the attitudes and behaviors you want to influence. The richer and more specific the information about your target audience, the more valuable it will be.

Your audience profile should include information about:

- Broad values and attitudes that frame your audience's thinking and decisions about their woods and woodland management.
- Specific information about how audience members view the target behavior—its perceived benefits or disadvantages relative to alternative courses of action, perceived ability to do the behavior successfully, etc.
- When audience members will decide to take (or reject) the recommended action and who or what will influence their decision.
- Demographic and other information about audience members' life situation, media habits (for example, are they TV watchers? Newspaper readers? People who scan bulletin boards in grocery stores?), lifestyle, and available resources. This tells you what's possible for your audience and how best to reach them.

This information will help you create a mental image of your "typical" target audience member. Let this image guide your decisions about your message strategy, outreach materials, and dissemination channels.

Tips & Ideas

1. **Start with the SFFI segment descriptions.** A lot of rich information about landowners' broad attitudes and values is contained in the SFFI audience segment descriptions, which are a good starting place for your audience profile. Even if you have not defined your target audience based on

these segments, you may find that one or another segment is more relevant to understanding your target audience, either because they are already doing similar behaviors or because their attitudes and beliefs predispose them take the recommended actions. Click here to see how you can use the SFFI's research-based descriptions of landowners as a starting point for profiling your target audience.

For example: If you have defined your audience geographically, find the prevalence of different segments in that area. The SFFI offers information at the State level for many States, and at the regional level when State samples are not large enough. Click here to see descriptions for landowners in your area of interest.

If you want to target people who might be predisposed toward a particular behavior, it will help to look at what types of people have already done the behavior in question. SFFI has statistical profiles of people who have taken the following actions: have a management plan, have a conservation easement, have sought advice about their woodland, and have cut trees for timber.

The SFFI has also developed profiles of two important landowner segments based on situational factors—new owners and absentee landowners.

2. **Refine SFFI segment descriptions based on your State or region.** If you have selected a particular SFFI segment—let's say, Woodland Retreat Owners—look at the statistical profile of Woodland Retreat Owners in your State.

If you find, for example, that most of the Woodland Retreat Owners in your State are absentee landowners, you should refine the basic description of this segment with what we know about absentee landowners: they are less connected with their woods, many own land for recreational or investment purposes, and they are more likely to plan to sell their land.

3. **Look for other research on landowners**. Do a quick online search to see whether you can find additional State or local information about landowners in your area. Or contact your colleagues to see if they have conducted any landowner research that can inform your communication.

4. **Conduct audience research if needed.** After you have compiled and digested all this information, think about what else you need to find out about your target audience. Most likely, you now know a lot about their general orientation and can formulate more specific questions about potential motivators and barriers. If you've worked closely with landowners, you and/or your colleagues may already have some good ideas about how landowners will react to different ideas. In addition, you can also find out this information by conducting some research (for example, focus groups, interviews, or surveys) with your target audience.

The idea behind developing an audience profile is to understand your target audience's perspective on the topic about which you are communicating—their core concerns, what benefits of the target behavior they value, what might pose barriers to their adopting the behavior, how ready they are to understand and believe what you say, and what additional help and support they need to implement your recommendation.

Instructions & Example
Develop your audience profile here, drawing upon SFFI segment descriptions, profiles of landowner segments in your State, and your own knowledge of landowners in your area.

Try to find information in these categories:

- General orientation toward woodland
- General orientation toward land management and use
- Beliefs and attitudes about the target behavior and its consequences
- Knowledge and capacity to implement the target behavior
- Main motivations and incentives for performing the behavior
- Main barriers to performing the behavior (including competing behaviors and beliefs, resource constraints, etc.)
- Demographic attributes and other useful information about their lifestyle and media use

Click here to download the target audience profile for the CBYC campaign.

- **Describe primary audience members' general orientation towards woods and woodland management**
- **Describe their beliefs about the target behavior and capacity to take action**
- **Describe their reasons for taking action and the main barriers to acting**
- **Describe their demographic makeup, cultural values, lifestyle, and media preferences**

Step 4: Clarify the Message

Overview
Good messaging means giving audience members a compelling reason to take the action you're recommending and/or overcome the primary barriers to taking that action. This is different from telling people what to do—it's telling them *why* (and/or *how*) they should do it.

Your message strategy lays out the argument that you will make to convince your primary target audience. It should consist of a few (no more than three) strong ideas that you want people to remember and believe. These ideas should be logically linked to the action you want audience members to take—if members of your primary target audience believe these key ideas, they are likely to take the recommended action.

Remember, this is about how your primary target audience makes decisions. You cannot assume that if your audience members simply know what you know, they will do as you would. They will filter your arguments and ideas through their value system and current concerns. Your job is to develop an argument that will pass that filter.

Tips & Ideas
1. **Start with a Problem.** People pay attention to information when it is relevant to a problem that they wish to solve or a concern they need to address. Framing your message as a solution to something your audience is already concerned about is often effective. Ask yourself:

- Does my audience see a problem or have a concern?
- Is it important to them?
- Do they see the action I'm proposing as a way to address that problem or concern?
- Do they have the knowledge and resources to do what I'm asking?

The key to a successful message strategy is to start with a problem or concern that audience members regard as important. This gets their attention right away and primes them to follow the action you're offering.

For example, if you are a conservation group, you may see runoff as a massive environmental problem, but your target audience—let's say Supplemental Income landowners—may not share your perspective. However, these landowners do care about damage to crops and farms. Linking last year's floods and subsequent farm losses to deforestation may be a necessary first step in your communication. Once you have their attention and they "see" the problem, they will be more open to the solutions you're proposing. So, instead of saying: "Plant trees because deforestation leads to many environmental problems such as runoff," you might say: "Last year's floods demonstrated how much harm we do ourselves and our farms and community by cutting away tress; if we plant some trees back, we can prevent or reduce this damage."

2. **Start with a Value.** Another message strategy is to link a behavior to a core value or identity of the target audience. If people believe that this action is a way to live that core value or express an identity, then those who cherish that value or identity will "sign on" to your action.

For example, Woodland Retreat Owners see themselves as stewards of natural beauty and wildlife. Therefore, linking management actions to biodiversity, protection of native species, and/or restoration of the natural landscape appeals to them. Working the Land Owners, on the other hand, see themselves as knowledgeable and respectful users of natural resources and appreciate that land use patterns change over time. Appeals to enhancing the ongoing and long-term productivity of the land work especially well with them.

Again, the key to success is tapping into the target audience's values and concerns. It also helps to start with affirming or reinforcing the value and then presenting recommended actions in that context.

For example, Supplemental Income Owners are most interested in ongoing income and investment value of their land. Conservation-oriented messages to this group should start with acknowledging their wish to maximize their income and earn money from harvests. Once common ground has been established, they will be more open to advice about managing their woods sustainably.

3. **Choosing among potential messages.** As you start composing messages, you'll find that there are many ways to persuade a particular target audience to take a particular action. Base your message on the most urgent or significant value or problem that can be clearly and unequivocally linked to the target behavior. Both the strength and emotional draw of the value/problem as well as the logical fit of the behavior with that value or problem make a difference. Your goal is to convince your audience that taking (or not taking) a particular action is an expression of their values and says something about them.

What a behavior says about you can change over time. For example, recycling started out as a way for environmentalists to express a "greenie" identity. Over the years, it has become a normative

expression of a responsible lifestyle. Today, not recycling makes a louder statement than does recycling.

4. **Learn from other campaigns.** Take some time to study others' outreach on similar topics. Review their materials, ask about their audience research, and ask them what's working for them. You will find that there are a few broad themes that underlie communications on any particular topic, although different campaigns may express or execute the same theme in different ways. Based on this survey of ideas and your knowledge of your target audience, you can choose a theme that is likely to work for your audience.

Instructions & Example
In this section, first write two to three sentences that summarize the argument that you will make to persuade your target audience to take the actions that you're recommending.

Also explain what audience needs, values, or perceived problems you're addressing through your argument.

This is what the CBYC campaign "said" to its target audience:

Your woods are a valuable asset. If you take care of them, they will serve you and your family well for many years to come. Good decisions at harvest time are crucial for getting the best from your woods now and preserving their value for the future. Call the CBYC campaign for information on how to plan your harvest to get the best value from your woods.

This argument taps into Working the Land Owners' desire to maximize the long-term value of their woodland, where the term "value" is used broadly to include financial, recreational, and emotional benefits of owning woods.

Write your basic message argument here:

Say what needs, values, or concerns your message speaks to:

Step 5: Channels & Materials

Overview
Once you have finalized your message strategy, think about how you will get these ideas out to your target audiences. What dissemination activities will you undertake and what materials will you create to support those activities?

It is important to think about communication activities and materials together and budget adequately for both. Even the best-designed messages and materials cannot have an impact if they do not reach their target audiences. Therefore, *first* think about how you'll reach your target audiences and then decide what materials are needed for those outreach activities.

If you're designing several types of materials, you can organize your activities into a campaign. A campaign is a coordinated set of outreach activities pulling toward a common goal. Different activities and materials within the campaign might be directed toward different audience segments or behavioral objectives to accomplish the overall program objective.

Reach and frequency are two important considerations when determining how much money you'll need for your campaign. Reach refers to how many target audience members get to hear your message. Frequency means how many times an individual is exposed to your message. One common rule of thumb is that people need to hear or see a message about six times before it begins to have an impact on their thinking and behavior. It also helps if they hear the message in different channels and from different sources.

The style and tone of your materials play an important part in signaling who the materials are for and how you want to relate to your audience. While some general presentation rules apply to all landowners, you can also tailor your materials more precisely to reflect the tastes and values of your target audience segment and the landowners in your State. This helps get their attention. It also signals that you understand and share their perspective, making them more receptive to what you have to say.

Tips & Ideas

1. **Primary and secondary materials.** Primary materials bear the main burden of persuading the target audience. They are more "meaty" and carry the main message as well as supporting arguments and information. Supporting materials are designed to direct traffic and attention to the primary materials.

For example: To increase participation in a cost-share program, your primary communication channel may be direct mail, with a detailed letter sent to all eligible landowners. However, you might use community presentations and/or local news stories to raise awareness of the program, tell landowners to expect the letter, and publicize a number to call if they have any questions.

2. Our research with landowners shows that **direct, local, and targeted channels work better** than broad-scale advertising or Public Service Announcement campaigns. When landowners see your message in local newspapers or hear it on local radio shows and at community events, they know your outreach is for and about them. In our research for the Call Before You Cut campaign, most landowners said that direct mail is the best way to get information to them.

3. Our research also shows that **intensive outreach**, even if short lived, can be very effective. People are more likely to remember something if they hear it twice in the space of a week than if they hear it twice over a 6-month period. So think about what makes more sense for your campaign—a slow, steady trickle or periodic spurts of activity?

4. **Pay attention to the tone, style, and visuals.** The style and tone of your materials should match the tastes of your target audience and how they relate to their woods. Adopt a language and visual style that will appeal to your target audience, even if your own preferences are different from that.

For example, Supplemental Income Owners might prefer a more pragmatic and practical writing style, whereas Woodland Retreat Owners might be inspired by more evocative and emotional language.

5. The style and tone of your materials can also reflect your organization's values. It can subtly convey how you are oriented toward this issue and how you want to relate to your audience (as an expert, a peer, a guide, and a watchdog, among others).

Instructions & Example
To develop this section of your plan, answer the following questions:

- What are your primary channels and materials?
- What are your supporting channels and materials?
- What style and tone do you want these materials to have?

Here is how the CBYC campaign answered these questions.

The primary materials for the CBYC campaign are a Web site and brochure that give landowners information about the elements of a good harvest and how they can ensure that their cut is good for their pockets and their land.

Each participating CBYC State will develop customized supporting materials and outreach activities to promote the availability of these sources of information. These materials will direct qualified landowners (people who are looking to harvest their timber in the near future) to a phone line or to the campaign's Web site to request additional information.
They include:

- A poster for use at community sites and events
- A brochure for people to read more about the campaign, what it provides, and whom it is designed to help
- A contact card for people to keep (so they can call the campaign whenever they need information on timber harvests)
- A presentation for use in a community setting
- CBYC materials will be designed with the following attributes:
  - Peer-to-peer, non-preachy, respectful tone
  - Simple and direct style; common-sense, practical ideas
  - Truthful and authentic—no exaggeration, hype, or fear-mongering
  - Use of folklore, idioms, examples, and testimonials to persuade or make a point (preferred to arguments based on expertise, scientific explanations, and statistics)
  - Project caution and thoughtfulness
  - Visuals reflect audience members' love of the land and the various ways in which they enjoy their woods with their families

List your primary channels and materials
List secondary channels and materials
Describe the style of the text and visuals

Step 6: Evaluate Your Work

Overview
Evaluation is an integral part of audience-focused communication. Audience responses to your outreach provide valuable insights for improving current and future efforts.

Generally speaking, evaluation activities fall into three categories:

- Process measures tell you how well your outreach was conducted

- Outcome measures tell you how your target audiences responded to your outreach (i.e., whether they took the actions you suggested)
- Impact measures assess whether the communication helped accomplish your overall program objectives

Because behavior change takes time, and it takes even longer for human actions to translate into measurable environmental impacts, the complete impact of your program may not be apparent for several years. That is why it is important to measure how well your program was implemented and how audiences received your message. These process measures are early signals that the program is working as planned. They also give you the ability to refine and adjust your program based on what's working. For example, if you find that most people who call your hotline say they heard about you on the radio, you might want to increase your radio advertising budget. Conversely, if some channels are not attracting a good response, you should consider altering those activities or stopping them in favor of those that are working well.

Evaluation does not have to be expensive. It can be qualitative or quantitative, formal or informal. Often, a lot of useful data can be collected while you are implementing the program. For example, you can have sign-in sheets at presentations, ask landowners where they heard about your program, or monitor how people are getting to your Web site. As a general rule, communication campaigns set aside 5 percent of their total budget to conduct process and/or impact evaluation. Think of this money as a way to maximize success for this campaign and as an investment in learning for the future.

Tips & Ideas

1. **Outcome indicators.** To develop appropriate outcome indicators, work backwards from your communication and program objectives. Ask yourself:

- Is there any indication that people are doing as we asked? Can we measure their behavior or get them to report it to us?

For example, if the objective of your communication is to get more people to request management plans, monitor the number of plans requested during the campaign. You can also compare this to a similar time frame in previous years.

- Is there any indication that our audiences' actions are advancing our conservation objective?

For example, depending upon your program objectives, you might want to monitor the number of sustainably managed forest acres, the number of forested acres, or the number of acres in easements in your State.

2. **Process indicators.** To develop good process indicators, focus on who you want to reach, how you're doing that, and what you want them to think/believe about the target behavior. Ask yourself:

- Are we reaching enough members of our target audience?

For example, you can assess your reach by counting meeting attendees or getting them to sign in, asking media outlets for readership and viewership numbers, etc.

- Are our messages and materials being received well? Do people like our messages and materials and think they are relevant and important?

For example, ask meeting attendees to fill out a short survey, include a feedback card with your collateral material, or simply count the number of people who request additional information.

3. **Proxy measures.** When you cannot get direct answers to your questions, use proxy measures. For example, you may not have an exact idea of how many people saw your billboard advertisement, but you can estimate that number based on traffic volume figures compiled by the Department of Transportation.

4. **Timeframe for results**. Consider the timeframe over which you expect to see changes in specific indicators. For actions like calling for additional information, you can expect immediate results. For others, like consulting a forester before harvesting timber, audience members may not have the opportunity to act on your recommendations for several years. In such situations, changes in audience members' beliefs and intentions are often good proxy measures.

Instructions & Example
To clarify how you will evaluate this effort, answer the following questions:

- What are your primary outcome indicators and how will you track them? (In other words, how will you know whether your target audience is taking the actions you intended?)
- What process or intermediate indicators will you monitor to get early feedback on how well the campaign is working?
- How will you measure the long-term impact of this communication on your overall program objectives?

Also consider: The timeframe over which you expect change to occur.

Here is how the CBYC campaign addressed these questions:

Primary Outcome Indicators: The primary outcome indicator for the campaign is the number of landowners who are using foresters to help plan and/or manage their timber harvests. Depending upon availability of funds, the campaign plans to conduct a 1-year followup survey with a random sample of the people who requested the informational packet to see whether they used a forester or did anything differently as a result.

Process/Intermediary Indicators: Each State will assess the cumulative impact of its outreach by monitoring the number of people who call the campaign hot-line to request additional information about timber harvesting. Additionally, they will also monitor:

- How the number of calls compares with similar requests before the campaign.
- What proportion of these calls is from people who are actually thinking about harvesting their trees in the near future?
- How many packets of information about timber harvesting were mailed out to callers?

In addition, each of the CBYC-implementing States will monitor process indicators that are tailored to their specific outreach activities, such as attendance at meetings and media impressions, among others.

Impact on Program Objectives: The CBYC campaign currently has no plans to monitor this, but good indicators include a reduction in the number of "bad" cuts, increase in use of consulting forester services, and a reduction in the number of people who call State foresters to complain about poor harvesting practices.

Timeframe: Since most people cut trees only once or twice in their lifetime, the opportunities to act on this information are rare. The conservation impact of the campaign will be seen over several years. However, the process indicators and the annual survey will give an indication of how well the campaign is working.

List primary outcome indicators
List process indicators and intermediate outcomes
List indicators of long-term (program) impact

Finish

- Review your plan below and choose what you would like to do with it.
- Click on any of the steps above to go back and edit your work.
- Click on the Save Changes button to return here to edit other steps or proceed through the plan to make additional changes.
- To return to your user profile and other plans Click Here

http://www.engaginglandowners.org/make-a-new-plan/add/new

APPENDIX J: Landowner Cooperative Case Studies

[From Jakes, Pamela, ed. Forestry cooperatives: what today's resource professionals need to know. Proceedings of a satellite conference; 2003 November 18. Gen. Tech. Rep. NC–266. Saint Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station: 25-29.]

Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative, LLC

www.masswoodlands.coop
Interviews conducted by Eli Sagor, August 2003

The Story

Since it was incorporated in the summer of 2001, the Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative (MWC) has set the standard for how to bring together private landowners in an organizational structure that promotes economic development while protecting and enhancing the health of forests in the region. In the summer of 1999 a group of forestry professionals from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and the University of Massachusetts met with local landowners, consulting foresters, loggers, and mill operators to discuss the possibility of forming a forestry landowner cooperative in western Massachusetts.

What followed was the formation of a task group to study the feasibility of forming a cooperative. In 2001, after many meetings and a landowner survey, the MWC was established. The Massachusetts laws relating to cooperatives were seen as archaic, so the group formed as a limited liability company that operates as a cooperative. What this means is that they have “cooperative” in their name, that each member of the cooperative has one vote, and that all profits are returned to the cooperative members. A unique step taken by the group was the formation of a nonprofit organization (a 501C3 organization), the Massachusetts Woodlands Institute. This nonprofit organization is completely separate from the cooperative. While the cooperative focuses on business, the institute is free to focus on education, technical assistance, and community economic development. The institute’s nonprofit status allows it to apply for grants that may not be available to the cooperative.

Members of the cooperative belong to or participate in other forestry associations— they are members of the Tree Farm system (www.treefarmsystem.org) and the Massachusetts Forestry Association (www.massforests.org), and have participated in the Forest Stewardship Program (www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/loa/fsp.shtml), but they find something unique in belonging to a cooperative. The MWC provides many services to its members, including forestry services (guiding preparation of forest plans; identifying reliable foresters, loggers, and other operators); ecological services (controlling exotic/invasive species, documenting the history of the land and its uses); marketing services (developing local and regional markets for low-grade material; arranging for wholesale, retail, and discount sales); and educational services (providing publications and training in the use of forestry equipment). Through all these activities, the guiding star of the MWC is sustainable forestry and its practice and implementation through Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) green certification.

Members see sustainable forestry as analogous to organic farming. Where 15 or 20 years ago organic farmers could recover the extra costs of producing their products through higher prices, now they receive a premium. MWC members are focused on producing value-added, FSC-certified products with the hope that their cooperative will be well positioned to take advantage of thoughtful customers who care about the health of the world's forests.

Members of the MWC are aware of the economic and business elements that are necessary for them to succeed. They are excited about opportunities to come together as a buying group and a selling group, opportunities that are not found in other forest landowner associations. As a buying group, members can achieve economies of scale not available to individual landowners. As a selling group, they are investigating how they can produce a value-added product that is of high quality, is competitive, and in demand. Members are developing a strong marketing plan that focuses on the story behind the product.

The MWC has developed partnerships that are critical to obtaining necessary services. Professors and extension professionals from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (www.umass.edu) have provided advice and technical assistance related to forest inventory, wood technology and potential products, and green certification. Additional help with green certification has been provided by SmartWood (www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/forestry/smartwood). Foresters from the Massachusetts Bureau of Forestry (www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry) were critical to initiating the effort. The Hilltown Community Development Corporation (www.hilltowncdc.org), New England Forestry Foundation (www.neforestry.org), and Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) (www.buylocalfood.com) have also provided key assistance. Local sawmills and other businesses have been important partners. In each instance the key was finding an individual in the organization who had a personal interest in the cooperative and who was in a position to bring resources (expertise, equipment, dollars) to the effort.

Members think the future looks bright for the MWC. They feel they have learned much from the experiences of other cooperatives, and they will succeed if they move slowly, not take on a lot of debt, and look for niche products they can produce efficiently and with high quality.

The Update

In January 2004, the MWC was awarded a 3-year, $499,253 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The goal of this grant is to expand niche markets for the MWC that focus on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) green-certified materials and other value-added forest products. Project activities include:

Development of niche markets. Develop and implement MWC niche markets for flooring, timber frame materials, and residual wood products (e.g., bark mulch, firewood, and pallet wood). This will be accomplished by gathering, sorting, and marketing logs according to grade and species and processing selected logs into value-added products.

Green certification. MWC is already green certified under the group certification process provided by the FSC. However, to market the cooperative's value-added products as green certified, MWC will also need to apply for and receive group chain-of-custody certification from FSC. This will require (1) development of a system for monitoring forest materials as they are transformed into value-added products, and (2) establishing a network of value-added producers who are interested in obtaining FSC-certified wood from the cooperative.

Database development. Expand the MWC database so that it will (1) provide detailed information on forest material that is available for harvesting from MWC members; (2) monitor forest materials as

they are transformed into value-added products; (3) organize information needed for the cooperative to function as a business (cost of goods purchased, inventory, sales, marketing, etc.); and (4) link the database with the MWC Web site so that MWC members and those who work on their land can have password access to information about the property.

Expansion of membership and land base. MWC currently has 30 members who together manage around 5,000 acres of forest land. MWC will expand its membership base to 125 members with over 20,000 acres of forest land and identify 25 regional artisans, craftspeople, and other woodworkers who will (1) become associate members of MWC, (2) receive Group Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) chain-of-custody certification as a part of their membership, and (3) create value-added products from FSC green-certified material that is harvested from MWC member forests.

Biomass assessment. Assess the market potential for the use of forest-based biomass fuels in southern New England by analyzing supply and cost data for forest-based biomass fuels.

Information dissemination. Compile, organize, and disseminate information about MWC. The USDA grant has provided MWC with the working capital needed to accomplish the above tasks. With this grant, MWC has hired employees, supported interns from the University of Massachusetts, established and operated an office, provided partial support for FSC Certification Assessment, and financed an initial inventory of value-added products.

Western Upper Peninsula Forest Improvement District

Interviews conducted by Pamela Jakes, September 2003

The Story

In the late 1970s, the State of Michigan was going through a recession. When the legislature started looking for ways to improve the State's economy, they saw Michigan's vast forest lands and the diverse and potentially valuable forest products those lands could provide. They commissioned a Finnish consulting firm to determine what could be done to improve the health of Michigan's forests and to inject new vitality into the State's economy. The firm recommended the establishment of forest improvement districts, modeled after those found in northern Europe. Legislators recognized the concept of forest improvement districts as similar to the old farmers' cooperatives that were so successful in the Upper Great Lakes States. Forest improvement districts would assist small private landowners, who hold more than half of Michigan's forest land, in managing their forest land, producing healthier forests, and generating raw material that would help stimulate forest product industries.

In October 1995, the Western Upper Peninsula Forest Improvement District (WUPFID) was organized as a 5-year pilot study. Although WUPFID referred to itself as a cooperative and is often cited as the first forestry cooperative in the United States, it lacks many of the standard characteristics of a cooperative—although members make up the board of directors, WUPFID is not actually owned by its members, and there is no profit sharing among members. It operates more as a private consulting firm with a list of clients referred to as members.

Members receive a variety of services—management plans are written, sales are planned and administered, and other improvements are carried out on the land. Members of WUPFID continue to participate in the organization because they believe that the professionals at WUPFID can be trusted to manage their land according to their objectives. For the many absentee landowners who are members, this trust is critical to their participating in land management activities.

Although WUPFID was meant to be a 5-year pilot project, its success in improving forest management in the region convinced the legislature to extend the project another year. Over those 6 years, WUPFID received approximately $2 million from the State of Michigan. In return, the State has benefited from WUPFID's management of more than 100,000 acres of forest land—land that was not being managed or reaching its productive potential before WUPFID. In addition, WUPFID activities generated jobs and income from the sale of forest products and implementation of management activities.

It's been estimated that this $2 million investment has returned more than $100 million to the State. In the early years, State investment allowed WUPFID to purchase a building and equipment, and employ foresters, technicians, and an office staff. In 2003, WUPFID's paid professional staff was down to two part-time employees—a forester and an office manager. Over the years, all the assets were sold to finance operations. The staff and board are searching for ways to continue to finance the operation. Poor economic times means there will be no additional State funding.

Although WUPFID has a membership of 900 and manages more than 150,000 acres, only around 300 members pay the voluntary $20 annual fee. Most of the cooperative's income comes from fees for service, and the staff and the board believe that it would be impossible to raise those fees. Members have other options for obtaining the services they obtain from WUPFID, and the board feels that if rates become too high, members will go elsewhere, eliminating WUPFID's primary source of income.

Despite the funding challenges, members are focused on re-energizing WUPFID through increased publicity. WUPFID staff feel that if they could generate funding to increase visibility, they could recruit more members, thereby generating more income from management of newly enrolled land. Ideas for increasing visibility include holding field trips and creating a demonstration forest that will show potential members the benefits of sustainable forest management. They hope that after 18 years of experience they can continue to provide services that maintain and improve the health of western Upper Peninsula forests.

The Update

In June 2004, WUPFID ended operations. Given the wood market in the Upper Peninsula and the lack of State funding, the board and staff found it impossible to maintain the office and provide member services. WUPFID records, including management plans and harvesting history, are being stored in the Department of Natural Resources Baraga office. The board of directors will continue to meet annually, preserving the possibility of resurrecting the cooperative if conditions change.

Sustainable Woods Network

http://www.sustainablewoods.com/
Interviews conducted by Mark Rickenbach, June 2003

The Story

The Sustainable Woods Cooperative (SWC) in southwestern Wisconsin was the first group to use a cooperative structure to practice certified forest management to produce and market chain-of-custody wood products. Following the organization of the SWC in 1998, its board of directors voted to dissolve the cooperative in 2003. The former members of the SWC are committed to sharing their experiences—offering lessons from which others can learn.

When it closed its doors in 2003, the SWC had 150 members with more than 120,000 acres in 11 counties in southwestern Wisconsin. There were two types of SWC members—producers and consumers. Producer-members were characterized as landowners who had purchased their property primarily for recreation, but wanted to manage the land to improve forest health. Many members had experienced or seen poor forestry practices on the land and were looking for an alternative management approach. The consumer-members were portrayed as green consumers who liked the idea of purchasing a product that was processed locally and told a story of sustainable management—they wanted to be part of that story. So what went wrong? The focus of the SWC was on manufacturing and education.

Manufacturing was producing certified, valued-added products, primarily from small-diameter or low-quality material from members' high-graded forests that would satisfy consumer demand. SWC members speak of two phases of the SWC: the startup phase (1998-2001) and the market development phase (2001-2003). It appears that debt taken on in the startup phase did not allow goals in the market development stage to be realized. It's well understood that any startup is challenging—the capitalization, cash flow, and the need to start generating income can be problematic—and the forestry business is particularly challenging. Several members voiced the opinion that the SWC moved too quickly into manufacturing—purchasing land, equipment, and hiring staff—in response to members' desire to see something happening. The manufacturing process required great amounts of capital (land, kilns, storage facilities, and equipment); operating funds (salaries, advertising, utilities); and sophisticated expertise to operate. Debt was incurred early on, and the costs of loans from banks, members, and a utility company, coupled with the expenses of day-to-day operations, eventually sank the cooperative.

Members had several suggestions for other communities considering forest landowner cooperatives:

- Start small. Try bringing together a few neighbors who can share time, expertise, and equipment in managing their land. Test some different approaches to collaboration. Try selling a few products, and move on from there.
- Watch out for debt. Be very clear about why you are borrowing the money, and do not give into the temptation to use borrowed funds for other purposes.
- Have a clear idea of the mission of the cooperative. In your rush to create a business, do not lose sight of the importance of member services. By developing a strong record of member service, you build support for the cooperative within the membership.
- Start your product development and marketing early. One SWC member said that the attitude was, "If we build the stuff people will buy it." However, when SWC products were available,

members found that there were not enough consumers to generate the income necessary to keep the cooperative operating. They had not developed a market for that product or had not analyzed the market to ensure they were producing something for which there was a niche.

- Tap into those networks that exist to support cooperatives. Groups such as the Richland County Economic Development Commission, Cooperative Development Services (http://www.cdsus.coop/), University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/), and Community Forestry Resource Center (http://www.forestrycenter.org/) all provided valuable services to the SWC.

The Update

The Sustainable Woods Cooperative is gone, but there is a group of landowners who continue to meet and share ideas. They are committed to improving the quality of their forests and the landscape—that commitment remains even if the cooperative does not.

Blue Ridge Forest Landowner Cooperative

http://nextgenwoods.com/blue_ridge_forest_landowner_coop.htm
Interviews conducted by Eli Sagor, August 2003

The Story

In the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, local landowners are investigating the possibility of encouraging sustainable forest management through a forest landowner cooperative. Many local landowners have had bad experiences with loggers or other woods workers, and they are looking for ways to take back control of their forests. They want a management approach for timber and nontimber forest products (ginseng, medicinal plants, recreation) that maintains or improves ecological health while generating income. What these neighbors envision is a vertically integrated organization that is member governed and certified to do sustainable forest management, harvesting and hauling, and processing, while at the same time educating members and the community about options for keeping the three legs of the sustainability stool—forest sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability—in balance.

This infant organization has received advice and support from many quarters. Staff members at the Community Forestry Resource Center (http://www.forestrycenter.org), Appalachian Forest Resource Center (http://www.appalachianforest.org/), and Virginia Department of Forestry (http://www.dof.virginia.gov) have been a great source of information. But the researchers of this idea have found the existing forest landowner cooperatives in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and elsewhere—others who have been through the process the Virginia group is just beginning—to be their most important partners.

Many questions remain to be answered. What organizational structure will be adopted? (It's not clear that this will be a cooperative, as opposed to a limited liability partnership or some other organization.) How large should the membership be? How do they raise capital? But many people feel that the cooperative is off to a good start with a processor already on board and a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified forester interested in participating (www.fsc.org/en). Locals are optimistic about the potential for a cooperative in the Blue Ridge Mountains and what it could mean for their community. They look forward to the interaction people will be having with each other, and the sharing of members' talents, skills, and resources in the sustainable management of their forest land.

The Update

In the past year the Blue Ridge Mountain group has organized as a cooperative under Virginia statutes—the Blue Ridge Forest Landowner Cooperative, Inc.

Lewis County, Washington

Interviews conducted by Charlie Blinn, August 2003

The Story

For our last case study we go to southwestern Washington. The Family Forest Foundation (FFF) (http://www.familyforestfoundation.org/) is leading an effort to explore the feasibility of developing a forest landowner cooperative to market trees from nonindustrial private forests. Foundation members received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study in Lewis County. They want to know if landowner interest in a cooperative is sufficient to proceed; if there are enough resources (timber, technical, and human); and if markets exist for potential products that might be produced by a cooperative.

Forest landowners in Lewis County already participate in a number of forestry programs. Although these programs offer a diverse assortment of educational programs, they don't function as a business. A cooperative would bring forest landowners together to manage their tree farms collectively as an efficient business and to pool their resources so that they have leverage in the market.

Maintaining, improving, and developing markets is the primary reason given for initiating a forest landowner cooperative in Lewis County. In this region, small forest landowners tend to grow larger trees than their industrial neighbors. At this time there are few processors for medium- to large-diameter trees, hence it's a buyer's market. The most important reasons for starting a cooperative were identified as marketing, having access to markets, being able to label your products as certified and/or locally produced, and bringing together landowners to more effectively communicate with each other and with policymakers.

Organizers and potential members have learned much from visiting other cooperatives. They see a need for a cooperative clearinghouse where the lessons of different cooperatives can be gathered and shared with other interested parties. One lesson the Lewis County group learned from their visits is to avoid becoming grant dependent. However, they see a significant role for grants in the startup phases of a cooperative.

They also know they need to focus on developing a realistic business plan that includes a significant marketing effort in advance of producing a product. They want to create a recognizable brand and educate potential consumers so they can differentiate between a wood product processed locally from wood produced on a local family forest and a product produced elsewhere on some other type of forest.

In addition to these challenges, the Lewis County group will need to overcome the fiercely independent nature of many southwestern Washington landowners. A cooperative is about bringing people together to manage land and run a business cooperatively, so overcoming the desire to "do it my way" will be a challenge for building membership and running the cooperative. The Lewis County group also sees a need to develop positive, constructive partnerships with local forestry businesses. Professional consulting foresters, in particular, may see a cooperative as a threat, so the

cooperative will need to find ways to include these potential partners in the early planning and development stages.

The Lewis County group has identified roles for a number of potential partners— foresters, bankers, lawyers, biologists, other "–ologists." They recognize that forestry is a very complex business and that they will need to draw on the expertise of a diverse group of professionals to make the cooperative work.

For now, the landowners of Lewis County see the year 2004 as being an intensive planning period, and they anticipate having a sound business plan and being in a position to hire a project manager by the end of 2004. Depending on the findings from the feasibility study, they hope to be operating as a cooperative in 2005.

The Update

The Family Forest Foundation recently completed a feasibility study for a small forest landowner cooperative in southwestern Washington State. The final report for the feasibility study can be found on the Web at www.familyforestfoundation.org. The results of the feasibility study indicated significant interest among landowners in formally organizing to address a number of forest management needs. Landowners expressed interest in the following services provided by a cooperative: reliable forest management information, estate planning, assistance with complex State and Federal regulations, and forest management planning. The feasibility study identified a number of unique marketing opportunities for logs and value-added forest products; however, organizing to market these products is a complicated prospect, and landowners did not express discontent with the current process of marketing and selling logs.

The Family Forest Foundation concluded that before any efforts are made to improve the marketing of forest products from small forest lands, landowners must be organized around a central common principle. Landowners in southwestern Washington identified an approach for minimizing the burden of State and Federal regulations as their greatest need. In response to this need, the foundation is first working to organize landowners around a federally recognized Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) (http://endangered.fws.gov/hcp/HCP_Incidental_Take.pdf). The HCP protects a landowner against changes in State and Federal forest management laws if his or her management plan and its implementation reflect state-of-the-art knowledge and regulations at the time it was prepared and carried out. The HCP will also assist landowners with developing a long-term forest management plan. Through the HCP, landowners will inventory their forests, and this inventory will provide information for future efforts to find better market opportunities for their logs.

APPENDIX K: Corporate Partnership Benchmarking and Case Studies

The following case studies were compiled by Andrew Eberle, a student at Yale University, in support of the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Stewardship Project.[19] In his paper, "Corporate Conservation – The Why and How of Environmental Partnerships", Mr. Eberle investigated several partnerships involving corporations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other entities working together to achieve conservation goals. Two case studies are presented here.

Case Study #1
Acres for America

Background
In the early 2000s, Walmart, the world's largest retailer, was attempting to expand its American operations beyond rural and exurban communities to the suburbs and cities. This effort met with much resistance from environmental and smart-growth groups who were concerned about the company's contribution to the increase of urban sprawl. In order to have an easier time entering into these oftentimes more environmentally conscious communities, Walmart realized that it needed to take more care to develop its image with regards to environmental impact and sustainability and to demonstrate its commitment as a company to environmental stewardship.

Simultaneously, a board member of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) began developing an idea for their next big corporate partnership project. Once he began sharing ideas with another board member who previously held a leadership position within the Walmart family of businesses, the *Acres for America* program was born. In keeping with the NFWF's typical project development procedures, the idea for their partnership with Walmart was created by the NFWF and then presented to the company as a partnership opportunity. The vast majority of partnerships with the NFWF were designed by the NFWF's board or staff and then they initiated contact with potential partners. *Acres for America* does not have a direct marketing purpose. This initiative is not being advertised to the general public. The goal of the program is to establish better relations with governmental and nonprofit conservation groups. Originally it wasn't even promoted among Walmart's employees.

A key component of the Walmart-NFWF relationship is the NFWF's reputation as a credible organization in the conservation movement. Their staff and board have consistently ensured that programs are always designed so that conservation opportunities are maximized. They take into account scientific and expert evaluations, and do not allow their partners to pressure them into supporting anything less than stellar projects. Had they chosen to work with a smaller, younger, or less reputable organization, Walmart would have been much more likely to garner accusations of "greenwashing." Furthermore, they have an operational capacity, which means that they can support a large national partnership. Their national reach and professional reputation are matched only by the likes of The Nature Conservancy (TNC). However, what was important for Walmart was that, unlike TNC, the NFWF only operates as a middleman in their partnerships. They simply act as a

[19] Andrew A. Eberle. 2011. Corporate Conservation – The Why and How of Environmental Partnerships.

matchmaker for project developers (other, usually smaller, NGOs) and financiers (corporations, in this case Walmart). The NFWF develops a conservation priority along with Walmart and then finds a strategy to best implement protections of this priority. Because of this, Walmart can position itself as having taken a more active role in the partnership, rather than with TNC where they would have likely funded projects that TNC had already designed and simply needed funding for.

In 2004, the *Acres for America* partnership between the NFWF and Walmart was officially created, and the program was launched in 2005.

Structure
The initial idea behind *Acres for America* was to offset the "operational footprint"—the total land area developed by the company for the use of stores, distribution centers, administrative buildings, and other land-consuming development—of Walmart's American operations on a one-to-one basis with protected areas. This was to be a 10-year-long partnership for which Walmart pledged $35 million. They projected that by the end of this program in 2015, their operational footprint in the United States would be approximately 138,000 acres; therefore, that was the goal set by the *Acres for America* program. Acreage protected under the auspices of this program does not count towards the mitigation requirements of any of Walmart's construction projects. As with all of the NFWF's partnerships, they are the primary force behind the conservation aspects of the program.

The NFWF accepts project proposals from other NGOs periodically (originally multiple times a year, and now down to once a year), including preliminary proposals beforehand to only solicit the best possible projects. With the submission of preliminary proposals, NFWF staff evaluates them against the priority level of what is being targeted for conservation, as well as against the larger goals of the program. The staff then invites five to ten [submitters] of the most appropriate preliminary proposals to submit full proposals. Once they are received, the full proposals are then evaluated much more rigorously by the NFWF staff. They contact resource managers (U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, among others) familiar with the project area to discuss the value and scope of the project, and whether or not the project is taking place adjacent to other protected lands. (A third-party evaluator in 2002 determined that NFWF investments had much greater and much longer-lasting impacts when done on lands adjacent to other protected spaces – when creating linkages between spaces). They may even make personal site visits.

Once the staff has evaluated the conservation merits of the various projects, it will submit all of the evaluations along with its recommendations to the NFWF board. The board ends up making the final decision as to which projects will be funded, and two to five grants are awarded each year to projects ranging in scope from $400,000 to $6 million (for a multiyear project).

The majority of publicity that *Acres for America* has received was generated by the NFWF. Walmart has published a few press releases related to some of the projects that they have supported and regarding major milestones in the program, but the majority of information spread about *Acres for America* originated with the NFWF. Additionally, while there is no requirement to mark lands or to have any particular public outreach program, all grantees are expected to acknowledge Walmart and the NFWF for their support of the project.

Walmart can have very limited influence on how the money is spent. The NFWF's staff and board are perfectly willing to hear the company's concerns regarding broad themes, but when it comes to

the actual awarding of grants, the NFWF insists on having the final decisionmaking ability in order to maintain its reputation as an independent conservation organization. Issues that Walmart has brought to the NFWF's attention include geographic balance; because the company operates across the country, they would like to see their money used across the country, though not necessarily in every State, in order to have the broadest impact for their purposes. Similarly, Walmart has made clear from the beginning that they prefer to fund larger, higher profile projects so that their investment will more likely yield positive attention, and therefore the results that the company was looking for in entering this partnership. This request is broad enough that the NFWF was happy to oblige, as there are legitimate project proposals coming from many different regions in the country.

The substance of the proposals is not something that the NFWF will discuss with Walmart officials, with the exception of NFWF staff members briefing Walmart officials with regards to the programs that have submitted full proposals, in order to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest on Walmart's part that could affect decisionmaking.

Achievements

The *Acres for America* program has been wildly successful, at least in terms of the goals that the partnership set for itself. Within only the first year of the program, with an investment of only $8 million, the program protected a total of 260,000 acres—nearly double the 10-year target. Since then the partnership has understandably shifted its focus and priorities.

Now, after only the first 5 years of the program, Walmart and the NFWF have protected nearly 630,000 acres. Because of the success of the program, the NFWF was able to realign its metric for evaluation and focus on large applicant projects with large impacts. In order to be considered, it is necessary for a project to be protecting thousands of acres, and is preferable that the project be helping to implement a State Wildlife Action Plan or another Federal conservation priority. The NFWF has received much praise for the *Acres for America* partnership, and the partnership has helped the NFWF mature as an organization by realigning its focus on large, meaningful conservation projects that have wide regional impacts.

For Walmart, this has turned out to have not only a positive impact on its external affairs, but also on its internal affairs. *Acres for America* was originally conceived of as a way to improve the company's image among politicians and community leaders. It has succeeded in doing this by at the very least making it apparent to its critics that the company realizes how it is perceived by environmental groups and is trying to rectify the situation. However, it has achieved not only that, but *Acres for America* has simultaneously boosted the morale of Walmart's workers, who take pride in the fact that their employer is engaged in ever-more socially responsible business practices. While the evidence of this morale boosting is as of yet only anecdotal, it was enough to prompt the company to begin widely promoting the program to its employees via brochures, contests, and presentations.

Finally, the open nature of this program—a selection of annually submitted third-party projects as opposed to dedication to a particular game plan—has allowed the NFWF and Walmart to respond more quickly to time-sensitive conservation needs that arise in the United States. The prime example of this facet of the program is *Acres for America's* response to the impact of the Deep Water Horizon oil spill on the habitats of the Gulf Coast. Due to the initial success of the program, and pressing impacts of the oil spill, the NFWF and Walmart came to a mutual decision to invest all funds

allocated in the year 2010 to projects relating to needs in the Gulf region, even if they are not strictly habitat protection projects as was originally intended. This meant that $2.25 million were used to restore Federal and State wildlife refuges, a decision which immensely benefited the region's migratory bird populations.

Summary
The *Acres for America* program brings to light a number of important lessons. Foremost among them is that the size and scope of partnerships need to be properly tailored to the interests of the corporation involved. With Walmart being a large, national retailer, and their donation being monetarily quite substantial, the NFWF rightly focused on finding a small number of very large, high-impact projects to support each year, rather than on a plethora of smaller ones. Furthermore, the national distribution of the projects was important to show Walmart's support for all of the areas in which they operate. With regards to the NFWF, the lesson learned should be this: an organization should not shy away from controversy out of convenience or comfort. Rather they should embrace new opportunities, all the while being sure to have done enough research and due diligence to respond to criticism upfront.

Case Study #2
Hayman Restoration Project

Background
In June 2002, a massive fire broke out in Pike National Forest near Denver, CO. Twenty days later, the fire—dubbed the Hayman Fire—was extinguished, though not before burning nearly 138,000 acres of public and private lands. Not only was this a large fire, with real consequences for those immediately impacted, but the consequences of this fire resonated throughout the State and region. The watersheds damaged in 2002 are the source of drinking water for approximately 3.25 million Coloradans, over 75 percent of the State's population, not to mention those even further downstream in neighboring States.

For years, Vail Resorts Management Company has prided itself on its environmental programming. Their plethora of sustainability initiatives now includes energy and resource conservation, transitioning to eco-friendly chemical usage, and guest donations through the Ski Conservation Fund, to name but a few. Vail's umbrella sustainability initiative, Echo, is seen as a way for them to focus their messaging. Echo gives Vail a coherent way to talk about their longstanding commitment to the environment and to the communities in which they operate. The initiatives currently at work in the various parts of the company are all tied together, and any grants that Vail awards for environmental work fund programs that align with their environmental priorities. Vail Resorts is very careful with how it manages its corporate image and Echo is no exception.

In 2008, Vail was just finishing a 3-year program in which it bought enough wind energy credits to offset the entire company's electricity usage, and was looking for a new program to support. After having piloted their wind power program, they were searching for something more tangible, something that their employees could see and touch, something that would really impact the communities in which Vail works. In searching for this new idea, Vail contacted a number of NGOs, including The Nature Conservancy, to get input about possible projects. Inevitably Vail contacted the United States Forest Service Region 2 Office, which manages the forests in which Vail's resorts

are located, and asked them what their most critical project was that still needed funding. The response was immediate and clear: the Hayman Restoration.

In 2008, the Hayman Fire area was still barely recovering, and as such a visible scar on the State—one that was having a direct impact on the health and well-being of so many people—it was a cause that would immediately endear itself to Vail's employees and customers. The U.S. Forest Service knew that this was an important priority area both in terms of ecology and of ecosystem services such as drinking water. The problem was simply a lack of funding for a proper restoration of the area. That is where Vail stepped in—2009 saw the beginning of Vail Resorts' 3-year Hayman Restoration project in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Forest Foundation (NFF).

Structure

The Hayman Restoration project was designed to be funded through a collaborative effort between Vail Resorts, the NFF, and a host of other Colorado-based companies. Vail was the initial partner and pledged $750,000 towards beginning the restoration, which the NFF matched in hopes of enticing donations from other local corporations, foundations, municipalities, and individuals for what was budgeted to be a $4 million program. By the time of publication, the NFF had very nearly reached its fundraising goal with the help of 10 different partners, the majority of whom became involved after the announcement of Vail's support for the project. Not only did Vail offer money to kick start the restoration, but they have pledged 1,500 hours of their employees' time over the 3 years of the program. This element not only injects a large labor pool into the program, but it gives Vail Resorts and its employees a way of being more connected to the community and is simultaneously intended to boost employee morale through allowing them to have a direct impact on the restoration itself.

Implementation efforts on the ground are being coordinated by the U.S. Forest Service and the Coalition of the Upper South Platte—a group of governmental agencies, corporations, and NGOs with a stake in the health of the upper reaches of the South Platte River watershed. As they are the two players with the most on-the-ground expertise in the region, it makes sense to have them primarily responsible for implementation. As implementation of the plan begins, a monitoring group has been assembled made up of a number of stakeholders including Vail, the NFF, U.S. Forest Service, Denver Water, and a host of other interested groups. This group is tasked with assessing the needs of the program, the resources that are coming in, and what is taking place or has taken place in the restoration area.

Accomplishments

The first year of the program, starting in September 2009, was devoted entirely to the creation of a restoration plan. Vail's donation allowed the program to hire a hydrologist and stream restoration expert, Dave Rosgen, to create an extremely intricate plan to restore the watershed. What was then produced was a 2½-year work plan that included not only the overall goals, but also everything down to how to utilize volunteers and the exact geometry of willow plantings. Before Vail stepped forward to fund this project, not only was the Forest Service not planning on hiring anyone to create a restoration plan, but they also didn't yet have a plan as to where to begin in restoring such a large tract of land as the Hayman Fire area.

After the plan was created, the U.S. Forest Service and the Coalition of the Upper South Platte initiated implementation efforts with new plantings of trees and the re-stabilization of riverbanks.

They are organizing the volunteer efforts and host work parties of Vail employees as large as 100 at a time. Reforestation is important to stem the erosion—usually by way of mudslide—that has caused streams in the area to have very high sediment levels and caused their banks to change shape. Real results from these efforts to reforest and reshape riparian areas will not be apparent until this spring's snowmelt, when hopefully water will be flowing in a different direction than it has for nearly the past 10 years. Only then will it be possible to evaluate the success of this restoration program.

The current goal is to have the restoration finished in 2012, in time for the 10th anniversary of the fire itself. By that time Vail estimates that it will have helped plant over 200,000 trees and helped significantly restore approximately 45,000 acres of the worst-damaged areas.

Summary
This partnership between Vail and the NFF makes clear the differences between eastern and western conservation strategies. While the West is dominated by federally owned lands, this does not mean that it is in any less a need of financial support for its environmental management. This support may not go towards the purchase of land or easements, but the limitations of the Federal budget frequently leave management areas in need of funds for important restoration projects, among other things.

Once again, this project emphasizes the importance of working in the region where a company is most active, as Vail's investment is having a great impact on its community, its customers, and its employees. In fact through its volunteer program, Vail is allowing its employees to become more involved in helping their community. Furthermore, the scope of the project is such that Vail can have a very large impact. This means that they are able to take ownership of the very tangible results of the restoration, something that would have been more difficult if they had only contributed a small portion to a much larger program, or if they had supported a series of smaller, less visible projects.